

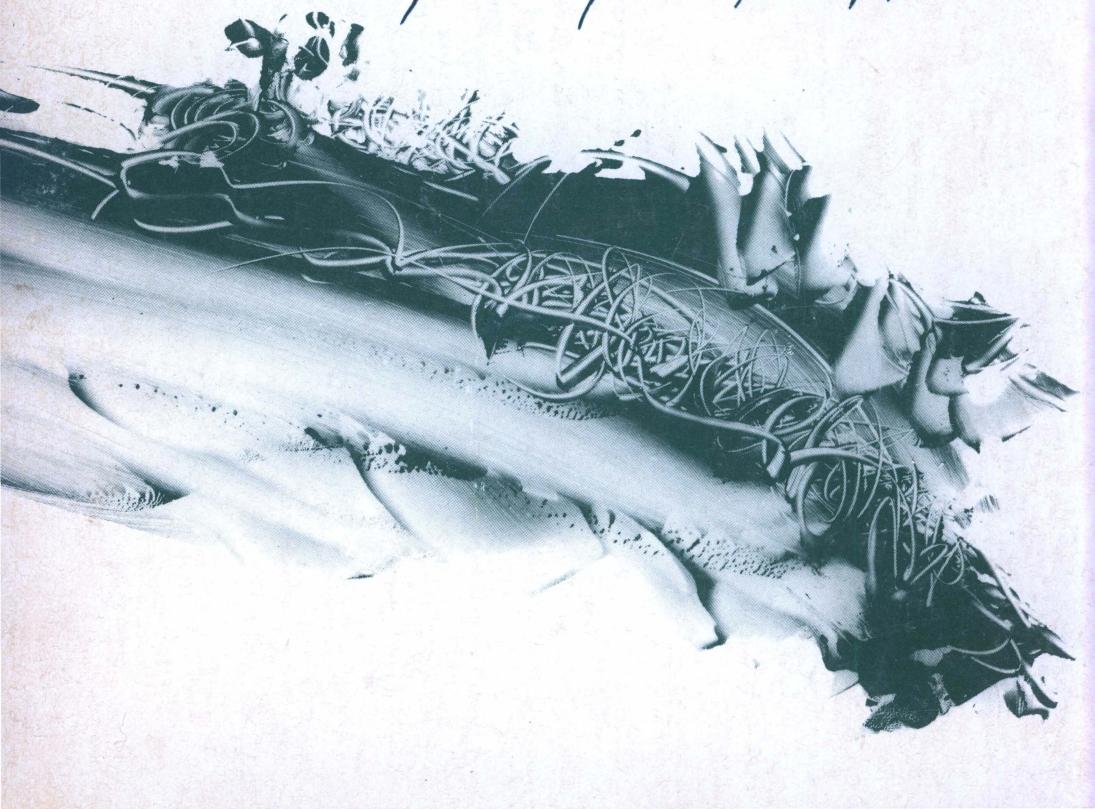


Radical Zen

~The Sayings of Jōshū~

Translated with a commentary by

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Preface by Master Hirano Sōjō



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Jōshū said: ". . . if you are asked,
'What does Jōshū teach?'
just say, 'When cold-cold, when hot-hot.' "

Foreword

THE SAYINGS of Jōshū is one of the outstanding Zen texts of the T'ang period in China. Jōshū (Chao-Chou, 778-897) was indeed an extraordinary Zen master. His sayings and his actions were of extreme lucidity, though this lucidity is not always immediately obvious. The very simplicity of Jōshū's words may sound puzzling, especially in translation.

We who have studied Chinese characters since childhood often stare at the characters of a Zen text for a long time before the correct image associates itself with the words. I hope that readers of a different culture, who face additional difficulties, will nevertheless be able to grasp the meaning of this text in Dr. Hoffman's careful translation.

This book, like any Zen text, is literature of a unique nature. Dr. Hoffmann's understanding of Zen and his mastery of the linguistic problems involved have made his translation as trustworthy and his commentary as helpful as one could wish.

—HIRANO Sōjō

Introduction

THE GREAT Japanese Zen master Dōgen declared that "There was no Jōshū before Jōshū, and there was no Jōshū after Jōshū." The Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki used to say that, of all the Zen classics, "The Sayings of Jōshū" was the closest to his heart.¹ Jōshū, one of the central figures of Chinese Zen, was no doubt the most unusual master in the history of Zen. Zen, as expressed through Jōshū, is radical, extreme, and sometimes even brutal. It is, I believe, quite different from the Zen the West has come to know through other Zen writings.

Jōshū² was born in 778 A.D. in northern China. Not much is known about his childhood, but one of the sources³ indicates that as a child Jōshū loved solitude and that his parents objected to his becoming a monk. The earliest episode recorded in detail⁴ is the first meeting of the seventeen-year-old Jōshū with his master Nansen:

Nansen, who was lying on his bed in his chamber, saw Jōshū coming and asked, "Where have you come from?"

Jōshū said, "From Zuizō ["Figure of Bliss"] Temple."

Nansen asked, "Have you seen the figure of bliss?"

Jōshū said, "The figure of bliss I haven't seen. A lying Buddha I have seen."

At this Nansen stood up and asked, "Do you have a master already?"

Jōshū answered, "I have."

Nansen asked, "Who is your master?"

Jōshū said, "Although winter is past its peak, it is still very cold. May I suggest, my master, that you take good care of your body."

In this very first record of Jōshū's sayings we can already sense the most powerful trait of Jōshū's personality: his abhorrence of the abstract. In the long history of Zen we find no other

master who had so little faith in "truth" and so much faith in man. "If the right man preaches the wrong way," said Jōshū, "the way will follow the man and become right. If the wrong man preaches the right way, the way will follow the man and become wrong." When asked for his "word," Jōshū said, "There is not even half a word." When he was asked further, "Master, but are you not here?", he said, "I am not a word."

Two sources⁵ mention that Jōshū had studied very little Buddhism before he joined Nansen, and we find no indication that Jōshū ever occupied himself with scholarly work or preached on matters of Buddhist doctrine at any length. He is often shown leaving a gathering of monks who have come to hear his sermon, without his uttering a single word or silencing a monk who steps forward to ask a question. However, this does not mean that Jōshū was not well versed in Buddhism. In his sayings we find quotes from most of the Buddhist classics. There is no doubt that Jōshū was also deeply influenced by Taoist thinking. Not only does he quote Lao-Tzu and Chuang-Tzu, but many of his comments on Buddhist matters are made in a Taoist mood.

Jōshū stayed with Nansen for forty years. From the dialogues recorded in this book we can sense that there was a deep understanding between the two. When Nansen died (in 834 A.D.), Jōshū was fifty-seven years old. He stayed in Nansen's monastery, mourning, for another three years. Then, at the age of sixty, Jōshū took a water bottle and a walking stick and left for twenty years of wandering. The sources⁶ record that upon his departure Jōshū made the following oath: "Even with a seven-year-old child, if he is superior to me, I shall follow him and beg for his teaching. Even with a hundred-year-old man, if he is inferior to me, I shall follow him and teach him."

In those years of wandering, Jōshū met with most of the Zen masters of his time. Many of these meetings are recorded in this book. At the age of eighty Jōshū finally settled down in his native village in the province of Jō.⁷ Although Jōshū repeatedly claimed that he had nothing to teach, monks and laymen, common people and rulers of state came to ask him questions, to listen to his words, or just to watch him. The major part of this book is a record of Jōshū's sayings from this last phase of his life, which lasted over 40 years. Jōshū died in the year 897 at the age of 120.

What is Jōshū's message? Jōshū's message is that there is no message: that the world with all its various things is neither "good"

nor "bad," neither "holy" nor "unholy"—it is nothing beyond itself. "I go directly to the core of the matter," says Jōshū. Repeatedly questioned as to what the core of the matter is, Jōshū says that it is "right in front of the eyes": it is "the oak tree in the front garden"; "the leg of the chair"; "the scorched kettle. . . ."

Our minds are trained to respond to things in terms of differentiation and identification. Underlying such mental processes is the universal prejudice that beyond the mere existence of things there is "an essence," beyond their appearance "a meaning." Yet once we realize that the existence of things is their essence (their appearance, their meaning), what is there to understand? In our quest for "meaning" we have tried almost every possible answer except the most simple and obvious one: that the meaning of things are the things themselves. Everything is, insofar as it cannot be denied. However, its *raison d'être* does not lie in any other thing nor in some principle or truth beyond the thing itself. The essence of a thing is no-thing or nothing. Thus, when Jōshū is asked, "Who is Jōshū?" he says, "The east gate, the west gate, the south gate, the north gate." As in Chinese towns of ancient times, that had gates on all four sides, one may enter anywhere, one may leave anywhere. However, this does not mean that there is no Jōshū. When, on another occasion, Jōshū is asked, "Who is Jōshū?" he says, "A rustic." And that is just what he happens to be—a Chinese peasant. When Jōshū is asked about the "purified" person, he responds with "There is no room in my place for such a rascal." Why should one be "purer" than one originally is? And when he is asked for "the highest Buddha of all," he points to the field and says, "That man leading his oxen, it is he."

Jōshū detests abstract concepts such as "the Way," "the Truth," or "Buddha." When still a young monk, he asks his master Nansen for "the Way." Nansen replies that "The moment you aim at anything, you have already missed it." Many years later, when a young monk came from far away to ask Jōshū for his "teaching," Jōshū replies, "You have just entered the gate. Well then, let me spit in your face." What may seem an almost inconceivable rudeness on the part of the master is, in fact, a very generous way of making the monk realize that there is no teaching. Anything less radical might have deluded the monk to believe that the denial of teaching is in itself some sort of teaching. What, then, are those who seek enlightenment supposed to do? This is best answered through one of Jōshū's dialogues:

A monk asked, "When I wish to become a Buddha—what then?"

Jōshū said, "You have set yourself quite a task, haven't you?"

The monk said, "When there is no effort—what then?"

Jōshū said, "Then you are a Buddha already."

Whatever the cultural influences were that shaped Jōshū's mind, his teaching cannot and should not be approached as if it were a philosophical or even an antiphilosophical "system." Each one of the 458 episodes of Jōshū's life recorded in this book is a direct expression of his way. If any of these seems bizarre, it is because his way is so extremely simple and so absolutely clear that we find it hard to understand. We should always keep in mind that Jōshū says what he says for no particular "reason." There is thus no particular need to "understand."

Some thirty or forty of the sayings of Jōshū that appear in this book have already been translated into western languages. But this is, to the best of my knowledge, the first time that this Zen classic is translated as a whole. My translation is based mainly on a Chinese text from the twelfth century, *Kosonshukugyō*, which includes the sayings of various Zen masters. It was first edited by a Zen master from Kyoto, Muchaku Dōchū (1653–1745). The edition I used for this translation was prepared by professor Yanagida Seizan and published in 1973 by Chūbun Publishing House. I also referred to the *Jōshūzenjigoroku* (edited by Suzuki Daisetsu and Akizuki Ryūmin, and published by Shunju Publishing House in 1969), which is based on a different Chinese manuscript, the *Kosonshukugoroku*. The two Chinese sources differ only slightly.

I have tried to make the translation as clear as possible for the western reader. Therefore, I have omitted from my translation a number of sayings that appear in the Chinese sources—some because they are based on puns that cannot be translated into English, and others because they deal with points of Buddhist doctrine of interest only to the scholar. Throughout, I have refrained from using terms that would not be understood by a reader with only a limited knowledge of Buddhism. When I could not avoid Buddhist terms, I explained them within the text or in the commentary.

A great number of sayings need no further comment. Where I

felt a comment would be helpful, I added a short suggestive comment (rather than a detailed "explanation") which I hoped would help stimulate the reader to grasp the meaning. In a few cases I quoted Zen poems.⁹

I wish to express my deep gratitude to Zen master Hirano Sōjō, and to Shu Hikosaka, who went over the text with me and offered invaluable suggestions. I should also like to thank the University of Haifa for a grant which enabled me to complete this book.

1.

Jōshū asked [his master] Nansen, "The Way—what is it?" Nansen said, "It is everyday mind."

Jōshū said, "One should then aim at this, shouldn't one?"

Nansen said, "The moment you aim at anything, you have already missed it."

Jōshū said, "If I do not aim at it, how can I know the Way?"

Nansen said, "The Way has nothing to do with 'knowing' or 'not knowing.' Knowing is perceiving but blindly. Not knowing is just blankness. If you have already reached the un-aimed-at Way, it is like space: absolutely clear void. You can not force it one way or the other."

At that instant Jōshū was awakened to the profound meaning. His mind was like the bright full moon.

NOTE: Nansen suggests that the Way of Zen is not "a way." Where there is "a way," there is bound to be "another way." If you aim at something overconsciously, you tend to exclude what seems to you to be irrelevant to what you consider your "aim." Thus, "knowledge," which is based upon distinction and differentiation, is blind to the all-encompassing. What is the use of searching for a goal that is not-grass, not-frog, not-stick, not anything that is a thing?

2.

Master Nansen had just entered the lecture hall when Jōshū asked, "Bright? Dark?" Nansen went straight back to his room.

Jōshū then left the lecture hall and said, "The old master, faced with this one question of mine, could not bring forth a single word for an answer."

The head monk said, "You should not say that the Master was lacking in words. It is, of course, you who did not understand."

At that Jōshū hit the head monk and said, "It is in fact Nansen who should have a taste of this stick."

NOTE: Jōshū asks Nansen whether in the enlightened mind things are distinguished ("bright") or equal ("dark"). If one distinguishes between things, how can all things be one? But if all things are one, what happens to the world with its lakes and volcanoes, buses and little children? Whatever way one thinks of it, one finds oneself in a trap of logic. Nansen escapes the trap. The head monk does not; he seems to believe that truth can be defined through thought, and that words are either right or wrong. Jōshū helps the head monk to rid himself of these delusions by confusing him still more.

3.

Jōshū asked Nansen, "The one who knows that there is [knows *u*, "being" or "existence"], where does he go?"

Nansen said, "He will become the cow of the parishioner who lives near the monastery gate."

Jōshū said, "Thank you, Master, for your teaching."

Nansen said, "Last night, at midnight, the moon was shining through the window."

NOTE: According to the older tradition of Indian Buddhism, the state of nirvana is a state of "nonbeing" or "nonexistence"—that is, a state of "liberation" from the world of phenomena in all its forms and colors. In contrast to this view, Nansen suggests that enlightenment is not anything beyond the world. Those who are enlightened "liberate" themselves not from the world but from their own deluded minds, which force metaphysical distinctions upon the world. If it is a cow, it is a cow; if it is the moon shining through the window, it is moonlight. Where is "being"? Where is "nonbeing"? There is a Zen saying:

All the Buddhas of past present and future do not know that there is.

Yet the racoons and the white oxen know that there is.

4.

Jōshū served as the monk in charge of tending the furnace in Nansen's monastery. Once when all the monks were out gathering vegetables, Jōshū shouted from the meditation hall, "Fire! Fire!"

The monks hurried to the entrance of the meditation hall. At that Jōshū slammed the door.

The monks were speechless. But Nansen tossed the key through the window, and Jōshū opened the door.

NOTE: Jōshū's show implies the Buddhist call for "deliverance." The monks who speculate about the "zen meaning" of Jōshū's call fail to respond. Nansen's action is both practical and symbolic. He enables Jōshū to free himself from the "fire," yet at the same time he suggests that, although the master may hand over the key, one must use it by oneself.

5.

Jōshū was standing on the ladder above the well at Nansen's monastery, drawing water, when he saw Nansen passing below. He held on to a rung, dangling his feet in midair, and cried, "Help! Help!"

Nansen climbed the ladder, saying, "One, two, three, four, five." After a moment Jōshū turned to Nansen to offer his thanks. He said, "Master, I am grateful for your saving me a little while ago."

NOTE: In his show Jōshū calls on his master Nansen to "save" him. Nansen does not respond with a saintlike "salvation" act but slowly climbs up the ladder. Nansen does not rush to "save" Jōshū, not only because Jōshū's call for help is a show, but because even where there is real need for rescue (from the bonds of suffering), all one can do for the other (and for oneself) is to walk one's own path step by step. Had Nansen "rescued" Jōshū, Jōshū could not have saved himself. Jōshū thanks Nansen for making him realize this.

6.

One day the monks of the eastern hall and the monks of the western hall were fighting over a cat. Master Nansen saw this, so he took the cat, held it up, and said, "If any of you can tell me the meaning of this, I shall not cut this cat. If you cannot, I shall cut

it." The monks said various things in reply, but none pleased Nansen. Nansen cut the cat in two.

That evening Jōshū returned to the monastery and went to see Nansen. Nansen told him the story and asked, "How about you? Could you have saved the cat?" Jōshū took off his sandals, put them on his head, and turned to leave.

Nansen said, "If you had been there, you would have saved the cat."

NOTE: When Nansen holds up the cat, ready to cut it in two, he means to drive the monks to their wits' end. However, the monks, who are too conscious of the master, are taken in by speculation on the difference between life and death, being and nonbeing. What was it that Jōshū realized and the monks did not? Jōshū knew the cat. It may be true that ultimately all things are void, but there is no doubt that the cat would rather be void in flight than void split in two. By putting his sandals on his head, Jōshū suggests turning things upside-down. In his answer, the "human" turns into a cat, the cat escapes Nansen, and the problem is solved. We may assume that had Jōshū been present, he would have snatched the cat away from Nansen. As for Nansen, no matter how important it is that monks be enlightened, he seems to be overdoing his Zen if he has to bother cats with it.

7.

Jōshū asked Nansen, "I won't ask about ignorance; but enlightenment—what is it like?"

Putting his hands to the ground, Nansen got down on all fours.

Jōshū immediately kicked him down. Then he returned to his room, crying: "What a pity! What a pity!"

Nansen, hearing of this, sent a man to ask Jōshū, "What is it that you are so sorry about?"

Jōshū said, "I am sorry that I did not add two more kicks."

NOTE: Whereas Jōshū refers to the view that there is a difference between the realm of ignorance and the realm of enlightenment, Nansen somewhat overstresses the identity of the two. Nevertheless, there is no real disagreement between Jōshū and Nansen. Both of them ridicule the distinction people make between "holy" and "mundane." There is no need to give up dogs for the sake of God. God on all fours, kick him down (amen!).

Passing by the bathroom, Nansen saw the monk in charge of heating the bath and asked, "What are you doing?"

The monk said, "Heating the bath."

Nansen said, "Don't forget to call the cow and give it a bath."

The monk answered, "Yes."

That evening the monk entered Nansen's room. Nansen asked, "What are you doing here?"

The monk said, "I am here to tell the cow the bath is ready."

Nansen said, "Did you bring the reins with you?"

The monk was speechless.

When Jōshū came to see Nansen, Nansen told him the story.

Jōshū said, "I have something to say."

"Did you bring the reins with you?" asked Nansen.

At that Jōshū reached forward, grabbed Nansen's nose, and pulled it.

Nansen said, "All right, all right—but why this roughness?"

NOTE: If all things are void, and void is all things, a Zen master is a cow, and a cow... a Zen master. The monk in charge of the bath goes only halfway. He may know the principle, but he does not know how it works. In addressing Nansen as a "cow," he misses both the master and the cow. If Nansen says he is a cow, a cow let him be. Jōshū, who seems to know what a cow is, gains Nansen's approval. Had Nansen delayed his approval of Jōshū's way of treating a cow, he might have lost his nose.

Jōshū asked Nansen, "Leaving out all words, cutting out all arguments, please, master, say it."

Nansen immediately retired to his room.

Jōshū said, "Although the old master is usually quite a chatterbox, once you come up with a question, he hasn't a single word for an answer."

So saying, Jōshū slapped the attendant.

NOTE: If you affirm or deny, negate the affirmation or negate the denial, in any case you are bound to fall into the trap of words. Retiring to his room, Nansen spares himself this headache.

Had not his attendant been overambitious when it comes to questions of right and wrong, he, too, might have spared himself the slapping.

10.

One day Nansen shut the door of his room, scattered ashes around the threshold, and said to the monks, "If you can say it, I will open the door."

The monks gave many an answer, but none pleased Nansen. Then Jōshū said, "Alas! Alas!"

Nansen immediately opened the door.

NOTE: Nansen's closing himself in the room is not a "problem" that can be solved through an "answer." If you want your father, just cry "father." How else can the monks get their master back?

11.

Jōshū asked Nansen, "It is said that 'The mind is not Buddha; wisdom is not the way.' Is there fault here?"

Nansen said, "There is."

Jōshū said, "Where does the fault lie? Please, master, tell me."

Nansen said, "The mind is not Buddha; wisdom is not the way." Jōshū immediately left.

NOTE: When Master Baso was asked, "What is Buddha?" he answered, "The mind as it is, is Buddha." When, on another occasion, he was asked, "What is Buddha?" he said, "There is no mind; there is no Buddha." Metaphysical statements on the "essence" of Buddha (or of Zen) do not have any meaning. They only expose the working of a deluded mind. Like Baso, Nansen responds to Jōshū's metaphysical statement by both denying it and affirming it: "When you say it, it is wrong; when I say it, it is right." In this way he seems to suggest that it is not the right word but the right person that counts.

12.

Jōshū went to the lecture hall and preached to the people: "This matter is absolutely clear. Even the greatest ones cannot break away from it. When I was at Master Isan's, a monk said, 'What does it mean, "Our founder came from the west" [i.e., what is the meaning of Zen]?' Isan said, 'Bring me that chair.' If one is a master, this is how one must relate to the people, through the core of the matter."

"If one is a master, this is how one must relate to the people, through the core of the matter."

At that, a monk asked, "What does it mean, 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "The oak tree in the front yard."

The monk said, "Please do not show the people the object."

Jōshū said, "I will not."

The monk repeated his question: "What does it mean, 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "The oak tree in the front yard."

NOTE: "The oak tree in the front yard" must have been what Jōshū happened to see when asked about "the meaning of Zen." The monk suggests that Jōshū is taken in by the object in sight. But Jōshū's answer was simply that moment's situation. At another time, in another place, it might be a "pen" (right now in my hand) or any other "here, now."

13.

Jōshū also said: "Ninety years ago I met with Master Baso's eighty disciples. Each of them was excellent. The masters of today only pile branch and vine on top of branches and vines. They have all widely deviated from the root. With every generation it goes from bad to worse.

"For instance, Nansen, one of those excellent masters of the past, always used to say, 'You must proceed straight into samsara [the worldly realm of ignorance and suffering].' Do any of you understand these words?

"These greenhorn 'masters' of today, preaching by the wayside—they stuff themselves with all the rice they can get, and demand to

be worshipped. Then they gather some three hundred or five hundred followers and say, 'I am the master. You are the pupils.'"

NOTE: If you go "straight" into the world, you will not need the otherworldly.

14.

A monk asked, "A holy temple—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "A maiden with her hair rolled up [i.e., a virgin]."

The monk said, "Those inside the holy temple—what are they like?"

Jōshū said, "A maiden with her hair rolled up, pregnant."

NOTE: The purity of the "impure" surpasses that of the "pure." A mother cannot be a virgin, but how can a virgin ever be a mother?

15.

Someone asked, "It is said that you were on intimate terms with Nansen. Is this true?"

Jōshū said, "In Chin Prefecture there grows a big radish."

NOTE: Nansen was great, but so is the radish of Chin Prefecture.

16.

Someone asked, "Your place of birth—where is it?"

Jōshū pointed with his hand and said, "To the west, more to the west."

NOTE: The Buddhist paradise is said to be in the west. There must be a back gate to the western paradise; otherwise, Jōshū would be trapped in it.

17.

Someone asked, "What is the real substance of Buddha?"
Jōshū said, "What else do you dislike?"

NOTE: If you start distinguishing between what is "real" and what is "unreal," where will you end? Is there a place that is not exposed? Is there a thing that is not real?

18.

Someone asked, "What is the gate to the truth of enlightenment?"
Jōshū said, "The example of all ages."

NOTE: Don't make the gate any narrower!

19.

A monk asked, "'All things in their being are eternal.' What does this mean?"

Jōshū said, "I call the ancestors by their first names."

The monk repeated his question.

Jōshū said, "Today I will not answer."

NOTE: It is a delusion to seek the "eternal" in something that lies beyond the temporal.

20.

Someone asked, "Of everything in the universe, what's the hardest?"

Jōshū said, "If it's cursing, you may curse me all day. If it's spitting, you may spit oceans."

NOTE: The "weaker" you are (i.e., lacking ego, self), the stronger you are. The "hardest" thing is thus the "weakest." If you are whatever happens to you, nothing will ever happen that is not you.

21.

Someone asked, "In constant motion from dawn to dusk—how about that?"

Jōshū said, "A monk is not a farmer who must pay his crop tax twice a year."

NOTE: The monk understands the principle of "Enlightenment is within the vicissitudes of this world" too abstractly. Things change anyway. There is no need to run around.

22.

Someone asked, "The 'one sentence'—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "If you adhere to the one sentence, you will fall into senility."

NOTE: If you stick to the "absolute truth," you will not be able to move your limbs.

23.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "If you spend your whole life in the monastery and do not utter a word for five or ten years, and still people do not call you dumb, even Buddha cannot save you. If you do not believe me, you may cut my throat."

NOTE: The enlightened one is not a clever monk who looks dumb. He is dumb.

24.

Someone asked, "During each hour of the day, for twenty-four hours, how should I apply my mind?"

Jōshū said, "You are used by the hours. I use them. What is this 'time' you are asking about?"

25.

A monk asked, "What is Jōshū's true self?"
Jōshū scolded him, "You bloody hooper!"
The monk said, "Yes?"
Jōshū said, "See to it that you put the hoop on right."

NOTE: Fix yourself!

26.

Someone asked, "What is my essence?"
Jōshū said, "The tree sways; the bird flies about; the fish leaps;
the water is muddy."

NOTE: Just as it is.

27.

A practitioner asked, "To be dumb—what is it like?"
Jōshū said, "I am far behind you."
The practitioner said, "I'm no match for you."
Jōshū said, "Why then did you become dumb?"

NOTE: In "dumb" the practitioner refers to the true sage who is not conscious of his wisdom and therefore does not behave like a sage. Jōshū ironically praises the fine distinction the practitioner makes, thus suggesting that the practitioner is too clever to be "dumb."

28.

[Once, on a cold day, Master Tanka took a wooden statue of Buddha and burned it to get warm. When the head monk of the temple scolded him, Tanka stirred the ashes with his stick and said, "I burned it to get saint's bones."
The head monk said, "How could one get saint's bones out of a wooden Buddha?"

Tanka said, "Well, if there aren't any saint's bones, I might as well burn those other two statues too."

As punishment for his words, the head monk lost his eyebrows.] An official asked, "Since it was Tanka who burned the wooden Buddha, why did the head monk lose his eyebrows?"

Jōshū said, "At the home of the official, who is it that boils the vegetables and prepares the meal?"

The official said, "The servant."

Jōshū said, "Well, well, he is really something, isn't he?"

NOTE: Tanka did exactly what the cook does. Both act according to circumstances and needs. Burning firewood, cooking vegetables—what is the difference?

29.

[Zenaidōji was looking for enlightenment. The Buddha of Wisdom, Monju, told him to go to the south, where he would find what he was looking for. On his way Zenaidōji met a variety of people, each of whom helped him to understand. The ninth person that Zenaidōji met was the mountain hermit Bimoku. Bimoku took Zenaidōji's hand and showed him an infinitely small Buddha in it.]

A monk asked, "When Bimoku took Zenaidōji's hand and showed him the infinitely small Buddha, what was it like?"

At that, Jōshū took the monk's hand and asked, "What do you see?"

NOTE: Why shouldn't you see what he saw?

30.

A nun asked, "The way of the monk—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "It is forbidden to bear children."

The nun said, "That shouldn't concern you, Master."

Jōshū said, "Even if I had relations with you, you would not do."

NOTE: If you ask me as a man, as a man I will tell you.

31.

Someone asked, "What is Jōshū's true self?"

Jōshū said, "A rustic!"

NOTE: Expecting an abstract answer, he got more than he asked for.

32.

Someone asked, "What is the essence of all essences?"

Jōshū said, "This 'essence of essences' thing—you don't need it. It is the seven of seven, the eight of eight."

NOTE: If the one is not the many, what are three sparrows on a wire?

33.

A monk said, "It is said that 'The universal truth holds no truth'—what does this mean?"

Jōshū said, "East, west, south, north."

The monk asked, "What do you mean?"

Jōshū said, "Up, down, in every direction."

NOTE: The quote "The truth holds no truth," as well as Jōshū's answers, is taken from the Buddhist Diamond Sutra. If the "universal truth" is to include everything, it cannot be "this" as opposed to "that." It must be open to all directions and to all possibilities. It must be just what the world happens to be.

34.

A monk asked, "What is the essence of all essences?"

Jōshū said, "Had he existed, he would have been a fine seventy-four- or seventy-five-year-old monk."

NOTE: If he had known himself for what he was, he would not have denied himself for what he is not.

Someone asked, "The Way—what is it?"
 Jōshū said, "Don't mention it, don't mention it."

NOTE: The moment you aim at it, you are like a crab, walking sideways.

Someone asked, "The universal truth—what is it?"
 Jōshū said, "Heaven protect me from the devil."

NOTE: The truth-seeking spirit is the most harmful of all.

A monk asked, "What is the distance from Jō District to Chin Prefecture?"

Jōshū said, "Three hundred miles."

The monk asked, "What is the distance from Chin Prefecture to Jō District?"

Jōshū said, "There is no distance."

NOTE: If you make distinctions, you are blind to the void. If you do not make distinctions, you are blind to the things.

A monk asked, "What is the essence of essences?"

Jōshū said, "How long have you been essencing yourself up?"

The monk said, "I have been concerned with essence for a long time."

Jōshū said, "He is lucky to have met me. The fool was almost essenced out."

39.

Someone asked, "What is my self?"

Jōshū said, "The oak tree in the front yard. Look at it."

NOTE: For the same theme, see koan no. 12.

40.

A monk asked, "To teach the holy law in this world of ignorance and suffering is like putting a clean robe on a dirty body. Master, how do you teach the people?"

Jōshū said, "Where do you see me?"

The monk said, "Master, please teach me."

Jōshū said, "Not one of the honorable monks in the hall understands what this monk is talking about."

Another monk said, "Master, please teach me."

Jōshū said, "You teach, I'll listen."

NOTE: Jōshū refuses to be taken in by the monk's distinction between "holy" and "mundane." If the monk sees Jōshū as the teacher of a "holy" truth, how can Jōshū be part of this world? If he is part of this world, how can his "truth" be "holy"? As long as the monk does not give up his distinctions, there is nothing Jōshū can do for him.

41.

A monk asked, "It is said that true teaching has no form. But when there is no master and no pupil, how is it then?"

Jōshū said, "Who made you come and ask this question?"

The monk said, "No one in particular."

At that, Jōshū hit him.

NOTE: If you say you are "no one," I hit no one.

A monk asked, "How should I look upon this matter [i.e., Zen]?" Jōshū said, "What you say sounds strange to me."

The monk repeated his question: "How should I look upon this matter?"

Jōshū said, "Your not knowing 'how to look upon it' seems strange."

The monk asked, "Will I ever be able to accomplish it?"

Jōshū said, "Whether you can accomplish it or not, you must see for yourself."

NOTE: Zen is nothing you"look upon."

Someone asked, "To be devoid of discriminative knowledge—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "What are you talking about?"

NOTE: The monk is implying that "discriminative knowledge" is the opposite of enlightenment or wisdom (*prajna*). Jōshū avoids the trap of discriminating between the two.

A monk asked, "What does it mean, 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū stood up.

The monk said, "So that's what it means."

Jōshū said, "I haven't said anything yet."

NOTE: The monk seems to understand the principle of "here, now" (Jōshū getting off his seat), but in stating that "this" is the "meaning of Zen," he behaves no better than any "truth"-seeker.

45.

Someone asked, "According to Buddhism, the truth is eternal. How then should we apply our minds?"

Jōshū's answer: "Look, the emperors of Zenkan and Gokan reigned over the whole land, but at the hour of death they could not make use of even half a penny."

NOTE: If change is not eternal, what is?

46.

A monk asked, "The common people cherish riches. What is it that the monk values?"

Jōshū said, "Quickly—shut your mouth."

The monk said, "Will that do, if I shut my mouth?"

Jōshū said, "If you don't shut your mouth, how can you get at it?"

47.

A monk asked, "The word of Jōshū—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "There is not even half a word."

The monk said, "Master, are you not here?"

Jōshū said, "I am not a word."

48.

A monk asked, "How can I avoid being deluded by various things?"

Jōshū put one foot forward. The monk pushed the master's shoes toward him. Jōshū drew his foot back.

The monk was dumbfounded.

NOTE: The Zen master sits on a high chair with his legs crossed, his shoes placed in front of the chair. When Jōshū puts one foot down, the monk, as usual, attends to him by pushing the shoes forward. When Jōshū draws his foot back, all the monk has to do

is to put the shoes back in their place. Jōshū getting off his chair; Jōshū not getting off his chair—it is as simple as that. If the monk had not searched for meaning, he would not have been “deluded by the various things.”

49.

An official asked, “When the Buddha was alive, the people found deliverance in him. Now that the Buddha is no more, where should the people turn to?”

Jōshū said, “There is no such thing as ‘the people.’ ”

The official said, “Am I not here asking?”

Jōshū said, “If so, then what Buddha are you looking for?”

NOTE: If you are here, Buddha is too.

50.

Someone asked, “Master, where is your mind focused?”

Jōshū said, “Where there is no design.”

NOTE: The wild goose has no intention of leaving traces,
The water has no thought of engulfing reflections.

51.

Jōshū said, “I have been here for over thirty years, but as of yet not even one true practitioner of Zen has come to this place. Those who come stay for one night, have their meal, and hurry off in search of some warm and comfortable place to stay.”

A monk asked, “If a true practitioner of Zen did come, what would you say to him?”

Jōshū said, “You don’t shoot a mouse with a cannon.”

NOTE: You wouldn’t understand anyway.

Jōshū was preaching to the people. He said, "Brethren! If a man comes from the south, we should at once relieve him of his load. If a man comes from the north, we should give him a load to carry. Has it not been said, 'Ask a high-ranking person for the Way and you will lose it; ask a low-ranking person for the Way and you will find it'?"

NOTE: Jōshū spent his later life in northern China. This saying implies criticism of Zen teaching in southern China. In contrast to Jōshū's "rustic" style, masters and monks of the south used to indulge in "Zen shows" demonstrating their enlightenment.

Jōshū also said: "Brethren! If the right man preaches the wrong way, the way will follow the man and become right. If the wrong man preaches the right way, the way will follow the man and become wrong. Elsewhere it [Zen] is hard to look at but easy to see through. At my place it is easy to look at, but hard to see through."

A monk asked, "The one who is beyond good and evil—does he attain deliverance?"

Jōshū said, "He does not."

The monk asked, "Why not?"

Jōshū said, "Because he is within good and evil."

NOTE: The fish do not strive to know the water. If one is not taken in by "good" and "evil," why go beyond?

A nun asked, "Master, will you teach me the truth that has never been spoken?"

Jōshū rebuked her: "Hey! The kettle is scorched!"

The nun added water to the kettle and said, "Master, please answer."

Jōshū laughed.

NOTE: Haven't I taught you already?

A monk asked, "When the world has turned into a black hole, I wonder which way it will fall?"

Jōshū said, "I will not practice divination."

The monk asked, "Who is it that will not practice divination?"

Jōshū said, "A rustic."

NOTE: The monk seems to believe that beyond the changes of nature and man there is an immutable, eternal essence. Jōshū suggests that instead of speculating on what things are not, the monk should first see what they are.

A monk asked, "It is said that 'It is only in silence and nonintention that one will gain the word.' But if there is silence, what is it that is called 'a word'?"

Jōshū said, "It is high yet not steep. It is full yet does not run over."

The monk said, "Master, are you being full or are you running over?"

Jōshū said, "If that is the way you ask, it can't be helped."

NOTE: If Zen is neither keeping silent nor using words, what is it? Had Jōshū offered the monk a cup of tea or asked him to pull down the curtain, he would have made his point. Instead, he

quotes a saying. The monk ridicules Jōshū for having explained the point ("using words") instead of demonstrating it, to which Jōshū replies that if the monk asks questions of one kind, he should not expect answers of another kind.

58.

A monk asked, "To be holy—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "To dump a mountain of shit on the clean plain."

The monk said, "Master, make this clear for me."

Jōshū said, "Stop fucking with my head."

NOTE: If we do not divide the world into "holy" and "unholy," there is nothing that can stain it.

59.

A monk asked, "It is said that the absolute nature of the Buddha has no design, and that therefore it cannot be distinguished as 'this' or 'that.' But if this is so, are we allowed to speak about it at all?"

Jōshū said, "How do you want me to answer this?"

The monk said, "If that is so, I will not say any more."

Jōshū laughed.

60.

A monk asked, "What is Buddha? What are sentient beings?"

Jōshū said, "Sentient beings are Buddha; Buddha is sentient beings."

The monk said, "What, on earth, are sentient beings?"

Jōshū said, "Ask, ask."

NOTE: If you do not ask, you may not understand, but as long as you ask, how can you understand?

61.

A monk asked, "It is said that the Great Way has no roots. But then how can it be expressed?"

Jōshū said, "Are you not expressing yourself at this very moment?"

The monk said, "But having no roots—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "If there are no roots, where can I fasten you to?"

62.

[When Master Tōzan served as the resident priest of the temple, the god of that region attempted to take hold of his mind. One day Tōzan noticed a few rice grains scattered on the kitchen floor. He became furious and scolded the people for taking such an important staple for granted. At that, the god of the region realized that he could not take hold of Tōzan's mind, and bowed in reverence.]
A monk asked, "When you are [like Tōzan] practicing correctly, can the devil take hold of you?"

Jōshū said, "He can."

The monk said, "Where does the fault lie?"

Jōshū said, "The fault lies in pursuit."

The monk said, "If that is so, I shall not practice."

Jōshū said, "Practice."

NOTE: The devil feeds on the space between thought and action.

63.

Someone asked, "The full moon in the middle of the sky—where does its light originate?"

Jōshū said, "Where does the moon originate?"

NOTE: Where does this comment originate?

64.

A monk asked, "I am told that the master said, 'The Way has nothing to do with the practice. Where there is no defilement, nothing is lacking.' This 'no defilement'—what does it mean?"

Jōshū said, "Examine the inside and the outside."

The monk said, "Do you yourself examine them?"

Jōshū said, "I do."

The monk said, "What is wrong with you that you must examine them?"

Jōshū said, "What about you?"

65.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said, "It is like having a crystal ball in the palm of your hand. A barbarian comes, a barbarian appears. A countryman comes, a countryman appears."

NOTE: The enlightened mind might well be likened to a "crystal ball that reflects everything as it appears. But if you do not smash the "ball" (i.e., the consciousness of enlightenment), how can you welcome the "guest" (i.e., the world of phenomena)?

66.

Jōshū said, "A blade of grass means as much to me as a sixteen-foot golden Buddha. I can use a sixteen-foot golden Buddha like a blade of grass. Buddha is passion and suffering; passion and suffering are Buddha."

A monk asked, "For whom is Buddha suffering?"

Jōshū said, "For all mankind."

The monk asked, "How can one achieve deliverance?"

Jōshū said, "What will you do with it?"

NOTE: Buddha may be suffering so that all may attain enlightenment. But enlightenment has nothing to do with "deliverance" from this world. What is there to do in "Paradise"?

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "When I teach, I go directly to the core of the matter. If you say I should use the various techniques to fulfill your various needs, go to those who employ all the methods and teach all the doctrines. If you do not understand, whose fault is it?

"However great a master I may meet, I can say, 'I did not betray the people's trust.' No matter who asks me, I always go directly to the core of the matter."

NOTE: For the same theme, see Koan no. 12.

Someone asked, "It has always been said, 'The mind as it is, is Buddha.' But if it is not the mind as it is, can it be questioned?" Jōshū said, "Forget this 'mind as it is' thing for a moment. What are you asking about?"

NOTE: For the same theme, see Koan no. 11.

A monk asked, "If the old mirror is not polished, will it still shine?"

Jōshū said, "The cause lies in a former life, the effect in this life."

NOTE: The question suggests that even though the mind may be deluded ("not polished"), essentially it is enlightened. Jōshū does not reject this view, but he reminds us of the traditional Buddhist doctrine which views life as a process of moral causality. Thus, Jōshū is saying that "Whether the mirror is shining should not concern you. Polish it."

70.

Someone asked, "For one who has gone beyond the world of passions, beyond the world of forms, and beyond the formless—what is it like?"

Jōshū said: "You cannot confine him."

71.

[It is said that when Master Gozu still lived as a hermit in the mountains, the birds used to drop flowers by his feet. But after Gozu met Master Dōshin and attained enlightenment, the birds came no more.]

Someone asked, "When Gozu had not yet met Dōshin, the birds used to drop flowers at his feet. Why did the birds cease to do so after he met Dōshin?"

Jōshū said, "Being related to the worldly, not being related to the worldly."

NOTE: Before enlightenment the world is full of wonders. After enlightenment it is as it is: Gozu strives no more, the birds fly south.

72.

Someone asked, "Free like a white cloud—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "It does not compare with the spring breeze that gently touches everything."

73.

[A parable in the Lotus Sutra describes a man whose house catches on fire while his children are inside, absorbed in their games. In order to lure his children out of the burning house, the father tells them there is a wonderful white cow outside.]

A monk asked, "The white cow outside—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "Under the moonlight there is no need for color." The monk asked, "That cow—what does it feed on?" Jōshū said, "It never bites at anything." The monk said, "Master, please answer." Jōshū said, "It is only proper that I should be like this."

NOTE: In Buddhist tradition the teaching of the Way may take different forms according to the level of the disciples. Jōshū rejects such teaching devices (*hōben*), which are intended to "lure" the believers to salvation. Instead, he points "directly to the core of the matter." Salvation is not anything outside the world ("a white cow outside"). The world being what it is, why strive for something else? ("Under the moonlight there is no need for color.") Enlightenment is not a matter of reaching at something that is outside, but of being what one originally is. Is there anything that is not a "white cow"?

74.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "The moment you try to apply your mind this way or that way, you have already missed the point."

At that, a monk asked, "And if I do not try to apply my mind—how about that?"

Jōshū hit the monk three times and said, "I have betrayed your expectations, haven't I?"

NOTE: The monk who declares that he "does not try" tries too hard.

75.

A monk asked, "In general, where there are questions and answers [between pupils and a Zen master], there is a tendency to lapse into self-consciousness. Master, how do you manage to respond without lapsing into self-consciousness?"

Jōshū said, "Ask."

The monk said, "Master, you say it, please."

Jōshū said, "This is certainly not the way it should be done."

NOTE: If you do not want to "fall into self-consciousness," say it quick!

76.

[In the Lotus Sutra it is told that the eight-year-old daughter of the Dragon King presented Buddha with a treasure of precious jewels. Buddha accepted the offering and enlightened her.]

A monk asked, "It is said that the daughter of the Dragon King made an intimate offering to the Buddha. What was this?"

Jōshū stretched out both hands in a gesture of offering.

NOTE: It is not the "what" but the "how."

77.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "My teaching is easy but difficult, difficult but easy. Elsewhere it [Zen] is hard to look at but easy to see through. At my place it is easy to look at but hard to see through. If you can understand this, you are without peer.

When people ask you 'Who have you studied with?' and you say, 'I studied with Jōshū,' you do me a disservice. If you say, 'I have not studied with Jōshū,' you deny yourselves. Well, then, how will you answer?"

A monk asked, "Whatever the eyes fall upon does disservice to you. How can one avoid abusing you?"

Jōshū said, "The moment you try not to abuse, you are already abusing."

NOTE: If you say, "I studied with Jōshū," you are taken in by the world of forms. What is it, then, that you have realized? If you say, "I have not studied with Jōshū," you deny the obvious. Why don't you just say, "I have been up the mountain"?

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "I will teach you how to say it. When you are asked, just say, 'I have studied with Jōshū.' If you are asked, 'What does he teach?,' just say, 'When cold—cold; when hot—hot.' If, on top of that, one says to you, 'That is not what I am asking,' just say, 'What is it that you are asking?' If you are again asked, 'What does he teach?,' reply at once, 'When I came here, my master did not give me a message for you. If you want to know about Jōshū, you should go to him yourself and ask.' "

Someone asked, "When one is not concerned about before and after, past and future—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "Forget this 'not being concerned about before and after' thing for a while. To whom are you talking?"

NOTE: I am right here.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "Kashō transmitted it to Anan. Tell me who Daruma transmitted it to."

A monk asked, "What if we say that the second patriarch, Eka, attained the marrow [essence] of Daruma?"

Jōshū said, "Don't abuse the second patriarch."

NOTE: According to the Zen tradition, Kashō (Maha Kasyapa), one of the Buddha's ten disciples, was the first one to attain Zen realization. Kashō transmitted his realization to Anan (Ananda). Daruma (Bodhidharma) transmitted Zen to China. He is thus considered the first patriarch in the history of Chinese Zen. His successor was Eka, the second patriarch.

All of this may be true as far as "history" is concerned, but in Zen terms, Kashō got it from Kashō, Anan from Anan, Daruma from Daruma, and Eka from Eka.

81.

Jōshū also said: "Daruma said, 'Those who are outside attain the skin. Those who are inside attain the bones.' Tell me, the one who is even more inside, what does he gain?"

A monk asked, "Would it not be reasonable to say that he gains the marrow?"

Jōshū said, "Just get to the skin. At my place I am not concerned about the marrow."

The monk asked, "What is the marrow?"

Jōshū said, "In this way you will not even get to the skin."

82.

A monk asked, "Thus open and exposed—isn't this the master's real self?"

Jōshū said, "But you are aware that there is something [i.e., "void"] that would not approve of this, aren't you?"

The monk said, "If that is so, then there must be another different self."

Jōshū said, "Who is that different self?"

The monk said, "Who is the self that is not different?"

Jōshū said, "You may call it what you like."

NOTE: Jōshū will not be taken in by "Jōshū." When the monk asks if Jōshū is what he appears to be, Jōshū suggests that the world of forms is, in its essence, void. But when the monk concludes from this that the essence of things is different from their appearance, Jōshū refuses to be trapped by such "philosophy."

83.

A monk asked, "With a superior person, you just poke him with your finger and he topples over. But what about the inferior person—what is it like then?"

Jōshū said, "Are you superior or inferior?"

The monk said, "Please, master, answer my question."

Jōshū said, "But the talk has no subject yet."

The monk said, "I have traveled seven thousand miles to get here. Please do not apply poor distinctions to me."

Jōshū said, "If that is how you ask, there is no room for distinction at all, is there?"

The monk stayed only one night, then left.

NOTE: The monk suggests that the "superior" (i.e., enlightened) person, having no mind of his own, moves along with whatever situations he happens to be in. However, speculating on the difference between "inferior" and "superior" is in itself a sign of inferiority. There is nothing wrong with the monk's knowledge of Zen. It is in knowing himself that he fails.

84.

A monk asked, "Why is it that an outsider is not allowed to take over?"

Jōshū said, "Who are you?"

The monk said, "Enan."

Jōshū said, "What is your question?"

Enan asked, "Why is it that an outsider is not allowed to take over?"

Jōshū patted his head.

NOTE: The monk, apparently not one of Jōshū's disciples, seems to be raising the question of succession within the religious order. Jōshū "consoles" him, suggesting that his problem is the consciousness of succession, not succession itself.

85.

A monk asked, "What is the principle concern of the one wearing Buddhist robes?"

Jōshū said, "Not to deceive himself."

86.

A monk asked, "Whether you say 'suchness' or whether you say 'enlightenment' or 'ignorance,' it is like talking in a dream. What is the true word?"

Jōshū said, "It is simply not to say those two."

The monk said, "Forget those two for the moment. What is the true word?"

Jōshū said "Onburinpatsu."

NOTE: The Chinese characters of "true word" stand also for "mantra" (a short mystic verse which, in esoteric Buddhism, is thought to embody a deity in sound). "Onburinpatsu" seems to be a mantra. The point of Jōshū's answer is, however to suggest not a "true" word but a nonsensical one.

87.

Someone asked, "Who is Jōshū?"

Jōshū said, "The east gate, the west gate, the south gate, the north gate."

NOTE: In ancient times Chinese towns had gates on all four sides. One may enter anywhere; one may leave anywhere.

88.

A monk asked, "The permanent—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "That which is impermanent."

The monk asked, "Why is the permanent impermanent?"

Jōshū said, "Life! Life!"

89.

A monk asked, "Not being taken in by various things—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "It is, of course, how it should be."

The monk said, "Such is my true essence, isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "Taken in, already taken in."

NOTE: The biggest obstacle to truth is the consciousness of "truth."

90.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "It is said that 'To reach the Way is not difficult; the only setback is that of choice. The moment you use words, it is a matter of choice.' I am not even in the realm of understanding, let alone choice. But you, are you not still very concerned with understanding?"

A monk asked, "Since you are not in the realm of understanding, what is there that you say we should not be concerned with?"

Jōshū answered, "I myself do not know."

The monk said, "You say you do not know, but why then did you say you are not in the realm of understanding?"

Jōshū said, "It is only because you asked that I answered. Now go away."

NOTE: Jōshū suggests that the opposite of enlightenment is "choice" (reasoning in terms of affirmation and negation). However, using words does not necessarily imply that one is taken in by "choice." The element of "choice" enters only where words are used for speculation. A nonspeculative usage of words does not contradict "understanding" ("enlightenment"). Yet it is not good to be conscious of one's "understanding." Such consciousness indicates that one is still taken in by "choice" (between enlightenment and nonenlightenment). This is why Jōshū says he is "not in the realm of understanding." The monk rightly suggests that if this were so, Jōshū would not be conscious of his "not being in the realm of understanding"; for if Jōshū is "enlightened," why should he make a problem out of it? Jōshū wisely enough says he does not know. Jōshū's "I do not know" is not only a refusal to argue, but also an answer to the monk's question. That is, Jōshū's statement on "not being in the realm of understanding" may have been too speculative, but he refuses to be taken in by his own words. The monk takes Jōshū's "I do not know" simply as a refusal to argue and presses Jōshū to explain himself. In his answer Jōshū suggests that being asked "words," he answers "words"; that's all there is to it. The monk would do well to become less clever.

91.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "It is said that 'The truth was not born; it will not die.' It is also said that 'If you talk, you give birth; if you do not talk, there is death.' These sayings are of no use. What, then, is the principle of not being born, not dying?" A monk asked, "This is already 'not being born, not dying,' isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "All the man knows is this one phrase."

NOTE: The saying Jōshū quotes only suggests what "truth" is, not how it is. The monk who does not see the difference between the principle and its function falls into the trap of Jōshū's words. Had he, instead, responded with "It is a fine day today," could he be accused of having talked? Could he be accused of not having talked?

92.

A monk asked, "It is said, 'To reach the way is not difficult; the only setback is that of choice. The moment you use words, it is a matter of choice.' Master, how do you teach this to the people?"

Jōshū said, "Why don't you quote all of the ancient saying?"

The monk said, "That is all I can say."

Jōshū said, "This is indeed an example of 'To reach the way is not difficult; the only setback is that of choice.' "

NOTE: The saying is quoted from *Shinjinmei*, a book of Zen sermons. It goes on: "Yet if there is no hatred and attachment, it is as clear as daylight." Having quoted only half the saying, the monk indeed proves what danger lies in words.

93.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "Those who read the scriptures are in the realm of life and death. Those who do not read the scriptures are in the realm of life and death. How then can you leave the realm of life and death?"

A monk asked, "How about not being taken in by either?"

Jōshū said, "If that is really so, you have got it. But if it is not really so, how can you leave the realm of life and death?"

NOTE: Here is what the Chinese Zen poet Kanzan says on "not being taken in":

He sings the songs
but does not know the tune.
He reads the sutras
but does not comprehend the meaning.

94.

Someone asked, "The moment the sharp blade of the sword cuts—what is it like then?"

Jōshū said, "The sharp sword is me. But where is the cut?"

NOTE: "Sharp sword" suggests the enlightened mind. It is only when this mind is not conscious of its movement ("cut") that it reveals itself.

95.

Someone asked, "When one is confronted with disaster, how can one avoid it?"

Jōshū said, "That's it!"

NOTE: The disaster lies only in the consciousness of "disaster." Once you are in the midst of disaster—that's it!

96.

Jōshū went up to the lecture stand, stood there for a while, and said, "Have all the people arrived?"

A monk answered "They are all here."

Jōshū said, "Let us wait for another one and then start the lecture."

The monk said, "I beg to inform the master that there is no one still to come."

Jōshū said, "It is hard to attain a real one."

NOTE: In "another one" Jōshū suggests one's "true nature" ("Buddha nature"). The monk who informs Jōshū that no one is missing misses the point. The "hard" thing about it is that if you look for your "true nature," you will not find it, yet if you do not look for it, how will you find it?

97.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "It is said that 'When the mind is born, the various things are born; when the mind dies, the various things die.' How do you understand this?"

A monk asked, "When not born and not dead—how about that?"
Jōshū said, "I let you go with this question."

NOTE: Jōshū's quote is taken from *Daijōkishinron*, a Chinese scripture that tends to be idealistic. The monk presents the view of the Madhyamika school, which holds that the substance of the world is "emptiness" or "void," not "mind." Jōshū ironically suggests that as far as philosophy is concerned, the monk's statement may be perfect, yet there must be a limit to nonsense.

98.

In a lecture Jōshū said, "If you say 'clear,' it is not yet clear. If you say 'dark,' it is on the verge of getting clear. Which, then, are you in?"

A monk said, "In neither."

Jōshū said, "Then you must be in the middle."

The monk said, "If I were in the middle, I would be in both."

Jōshū said, "This monk has been here long enough to say it this way, yet still he has not gone beyond the three words ['clear,' 'dark,' 'middle']. Even if he has gone beyond them, he is still in them. You—what do you say?"

The monk said, "I can use the three words."

Jōshū said, "Then why did you not say so before?"

NOTE: Here "clear" and "dark" suggest "enlightenment," as opposed to "ignorance." The point of the dialogue is that the moment you make such conceptual distinctions, you end up contradicting yourself. Words are not to be defined. They are to be used.

99.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "Cut off the heads of the Buddhas of Reward and Deliverance, and you will become a worthy one."

A monk asked, "The one who cuts off the heads of the Buddhas of Reward and Deliverance, what kind of a person is that?"

Jōshū said, "Not your kind."

NOTE: Deal with things, not concepts.

100.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "The great way is in front of the eyes—it is just difficult to see."

At that a monk asked, "What is that thing in front of the eyes that you are trying to show me?"

Jōshū said, "South, north—as it pleases you."

The monk said, "Master, you do have ways for teaching the people, don't you?"

Jōshū said, "What did you ask a while ago?"

NOTE: Have I not answered you already?

101.

A monk asked, "The one who has entered 'the realm of truth,' does he still know existence?"

Jōshū said, "Who has entered 'the realm of truth'?"

The monk said, "If that is so, then the one who has entered 'the realm of truth' does not know how to leave it."

Jōshū said, "It is not cold ashes. It is not a dead tree. It is a hundred flowers in colorful bloom."

The monk said, "So this, then, is the state of having entered into 'the realm of truth'?"

Jōshū said, "There is no connection at all."

NOTE: The monk asks whether the world in all its forms (u) is still reflected in the mind of the enlightened. Jōshū suggests that enlightenment ("the realm of truth") has nothing to do with leaving this world or entering another. The monk, who interprets Jōshū's answer as a denial of "the realm of truth," misses the point. It is the idea of entering a different realm that Jōshū rejects. With "a hundred flowers in colorful bloom," are we not in already? The monk, who was trapped by the distinction between "the world as it is" and "the realm of truth," now falls into the trap of identifying the two. Affirming and negating, differentiating and identifying are all the monk knows. The monk may "speak the truth," but he is still wrong.

102.

Someone asked, "The state of enlightenment—how does one attain it?"

Jōshū said, "Would you repeat that?"

103.

A monk asked, "Is there a person who will not be deluded even if all the various things appear at once?"

Jōshū said, "There is."

The monk asked, "The one who will not be deluded, what kind of a person is he?"

Jōshū said, "Do you believe in the Buddhist truth?"

The monk said, "The ancients proclaimed their belief in the Buddhist truth. Who is the one who will not be deluded?"

Jōshū said, "Why don't you ask me?"

The monk said, "I have asked you already."

Jōshū said, "There! Deluded!"

NOTE: The monk, who distinguished between "the Buddhist truth"

and Jōshū (who is right in front of his eyes), does not realize that delusion lies not in the existence of the "various things" but in the one who speculates on them.

104.

A monk asked, "Well, are the masters of today close to the great men of old?"

Jōshū said, "I would not say they are not close, but it is not the same."

The monk asked, "Why is it not the same?"

Jōshū said, "The one who is in the realm of truth does not preach the truth."

The monk said, "You say that the one who is in the realm of truth does not preach the truth. Do you yourself, Master, not preach the truth for the sake of the people?"

Jōshū said, "It is right here that I answer."

The monk said, "Why, then, do you say that the enlightened one does not preach the truth?"

Jōshū said, "Here I have been trying to save your father, but he did not show his face after all."

NOTE: The monk is taken in by doctrinaire thinking. If he knew his true nature (his "father"), he would see Jōshū right where he was and thank him for not having preached.

105.

A monk asked, "Even when I do not meet with you, are we still united?"

Jōshū said, "Where there is perception, there is union."

The monk said, "If you cannot perceive, there is no union, right?"

Jōshū said, "The one who cannot perceive is you yourself."

The monk said, "Master, can you be perceived?"

Jōshū said, "The closer one comes, the farther the Way gets."

The monk said, "Master, why do you hide yourself?"

Jōshū said, "I am here talking to you."

The monk said, "How can you say you are not evasive?"

Jōshū said, "It is only natural [that I talk] this way."

NOTE: The monk seems to be taken in by a mystical concept of "Buddha nature that unites all things." When Jōshū suggests that things are of a simpler nature, the monk runs into the other extreme of acknowledging only that which can be perceived (i.e., the world of forms). What the monk does not realize is that unity and difference are one and the same. Can Jōshū acknowledge identity with the monk without acknowledging difference? Can he acknowledge difference without acknowledging sameness? If the monk did not hide behind his logic, he would see Jōshū for what he is.

106.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "The daughter of the Dragon King made an offering to Buddha with all her heart. This is a matter of spontaneity."

A monk asked, "If it was spontaneous, why did she purposely make the offering?"

Jōshū said, "If she did not make the offering, how could we know it was spontaneous?"

107.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "Among eight hundred people aiming at becoming a Buddha, it is hard to find even one real person."

NOTE: Aim and you have missed.

108.

A monk asked, "Imagine a place where there is neither Buddha nor man. Is there practice?"

Jōshū said, "Even if you do away with these two, there is a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred million."

The monk said, "When a real one comes, where will you put him?"

Jōshū said, "If that's how you are, you cannot be said to be practicing."

The monk bowed.

Ōshū said, "I know a proper place for you."

NOTE: In his question the monk refers to the distinction-free void. However, in trying too hard to do away with distinctions, the monk is taken in by the distinction between enlightenment ("a real one") and nonenlightenment. Ōshū ironically suggests that if the monk is in the distinction-free realm of enlightenment, he might as well go to hell.

109.

A monk asked, "A white cloud that never falls down—what is that like?"

Ōshū said, "I understand nothing about astrology."

The monk said, "But there is 'host' [i.e., subject] and 'guest' [i.e., object], isn't there?"

Ōshū said, "I am the host, you are the guest. Where is that 'white cloud' thing?"

NOTE: In "white cloud" the monk suggests the carefree movement of the enlightened mind. Ōshū, who suspects that the monk is striving for the unworldly, rejects the "white cloud" metaphor. When the monk insists that his concept of enlightenment does not exclude the distinctions of the common world ("host" and "guest"), Ōshū invites the monk to come down from the "sky" and have a talk with him.

110.

Someone asked, "It is said that 'The truly skillful look clumsy.' What is it like for them?"

Ōshū said, "Now we have lost a truly skillful one."

NOTE: The Taoist saying "The truly skillful look clumsy" states, in a somewhat paradoxical way, that real perfection lies in what is natural. Ōshū ironically suggests that overconscious occupation with the natural is in itself unnatural.

111.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "I do not like to hear the word Buddha."

112.

A monk asked, "Master, do you work for the people?"

Jōshū said, "I do."

The monk asked, "How do you work for the people?"

Jōshū said, "If you have not reached the profound meaning, you will strive in vain to quiet down delusive thoughts."

The monk said, "Now, what is that 'meaning' you call profound?"

Jōshū said, "I will not lay down any essence."

The monk said, "That is profundity. But what is the meaning?"

Jōshū said, "Answering you is the meaning."

113.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "Each one has his Zen. Each one has his Way. If you are asked, 'What is Zen? What is the Way?,' what will you answer?"

At that a monk asked, "Since each has his Zen and each has his Way, why, then, did those of old and do those of today talk [about Zen and the Way]?"

Jōshū said, "Because you have lost your soul."

The monk said, "How on earth will you teach the people?"

At that Jōshū turned away and said no more.

114.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "You should not conceive Buddha and the Buddhist truth in a loose and false manner."

At that a monk asked, "How should I conceive myself?"

Jōshū said, "Who is it that conceives?"

The monk said, "There is no other."

Jōshū scolded him saying, "You donkey!"

NOTE: The problem is not how one conceives the "Buddhist truth," but how one conceives oneself. The monk seems to have heard of the "no-self" principle, but he does not understand its meaning. Had he responded more naturally to Jōshū's question, he could have spared himself the scolding.

115.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "It is not that he does not ask. It is not that I do not answer."

A monk said, "Master, what are you answering?"

Jōshū sighed deeply.

The monk said, "If that is how you answer, you have betrayed my expectations."

Jōshū said, "It is because a little while ago you took me in the affirmative that I have betrayed your expectations. If you had not taken me in the affirmative, I would not have betrayed your expectations."

NOTE: When the Zen master says something, does he make a statement? Since he uses words, it cannot be said that he doesn't. But if one assumes that he does, how can one understand what he says?

116.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "Tonight I shall answer at length. Those who can ask, come forth."

A monk came forward and bowed.

Jōshū said, "Lately I have been throwing tiles [into the kiln], hoping for jewels, but all I get back is this half-baked tile."

117.

A monk asked, "What is the real substance of Buddha?"

Jōshū said, "Buddha's physical body."

The monk said, "I did not ask about Buddha's physical body."

Jōshū said, "You just concern yourself with the body."

NOTE: For the same theme, see also koan no. 81.

118.

A monk asked, "When the bright moon shines in the sky—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "What is your name?"

The monk said, "So-and-so."

Jōshū said, "The bright moon shining in the sky—where is it?"

NOTE: In "the bright moon shining in the sky" the monk suggests the state of enlightenment. Asking for the monk's name, Jōshū makes him return from the "sky" to where he started from.

119.

A monk asked, "When I am completely void of understanding, what then?"

Jōshū said, "I understand even less."

The monk said, "Master, do you not know what is?"

Jōshū said, "I am not a log. Why shouldn't I know?"

The monk said, "What a fine lack of understanding!"

Jōshū clapped his hands and laughed.

NOTE: In "I understand even less" Jōshū suggests that, unlike the monk, he is not overconscious of his being "completely devoid of understanding" (i.e., enlightened). The monk catches Jōshū in his own words and reproaches him for preferring what is not ("the void") to what is. When Jōshū insists that he knows what is, the monk ironically suggests that Jōshū's "lack of understanding" may, after all, not be as simple as he makes it sound.

120.

A monk said, "If you say a word, if you raise your hand or move your foot, you are caught in my net. Now, detached from all these [words and gestures], Master, say something."

Jōshū said, "I ate my meal, but I haven't had my tea yet."

The high official Ba asked, "Master, do you practice?"

Jōshū said, "It would be a disaster if I did."

Ba said, "If you yourself do not practice, to whom can you teach the practice?"

Jōshū said, "You."

Ba said, "How can you call someone like me a practitioner?"

Jōshū said, "If you did not practice, how could you have overcome hunger and cold, and attained the status of a king?"

With tears in his eyes the official bowed in gratitude.

Jōshū lectured to the people. He said: "It is not that you do not ask. It is not that I do not answer."

He also said, "Do not cross your arms and clasp your hands. I will not answer through the Zen chair and the master's stick."

NOTE: Forget about "Zen."

A monk asked, "What is the sphere in which distinctions do not apply?"

Jōshū said, "Come here."

The monk said, "To go there is but the sphere in which distinctions apply. What is the sphere in which thoughts do not apply?"

Jōshū thrust his hand forward and said, "What do you call this?"

The monk said, "I call it a hand, Master. What do you call it?"

Jōshū said, "I use its various names and call it according to them."

The monk said, "Without using its various names, what do you call it?"

Jōshū said, "If that is what you want, this is the sphere in which your distinction does not apply."

The monk bowed in reverence.

Jōshū said, "Let me teach you the sphere in which distinctions apply."

The monk asked, "What is it?"

Jōshū said, "The Buddha and Daruma are your teachers [in this sphere]."

The monk said, "The Buddha and Daruma, the sages of old, have already said it all. What is the sphere in which distinctions do not apply?"

Jōshū raised his finger and said, "What do you call this?"

For a while the monk was speechless.

Jōshū said, "Why don't you say it directly, to the point? Other than that, what is it that you doubt?"

NOTE: Insofar as the world of phenomena is the void, distinctions do not apply, and a finger is not a finger. But insofar as the void is the world, distinctions do apply, and a finger is a finger. The world may be a nonworld, but when you see a finger, why not say "finger"?

124.

A monk asked, "The style of the master—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "I don't hear well. You must speak up."

The monk repeated his question.

Jōshū said, "By your asking about my style, I know your style."

125.

A monk asked, "When all the various things come to happen—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "All the various things come to happen."

The monk said, "Where there is question and answer, something is happening. When nothing is happening—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "There is no arising from the Zen chair."

The monk bowed.

Jōshū immediately said, "Do you remember the question and answer?"

The monk said, "I do."

Jōshū said, "Try and say it."

When the monk was about to open his mouth, Jōshū asked the question.

NOTE: The monk asks about the state of "nothing happening," and Jōshū answers with "no arising." The Chinese character for the two words is the same, which enables Jōshū to answer the abstract query in concrete terms. On top of that, Jōshū urges the monk to repeat the question and answer, suggesting that where there is no interval between thought and words, no consciousness of "happening" arises.

126.

A monk asked, "The right-in-front-of-the-eyes Buddha—what is it?" Jōshū said, "The Buddha [statue] in the main hall."

The monk said, "That is a physical Buddha. What is Buddha?" Jōshū said, "It is mind."

The monk said, "If you define it as mind, you limit it. What is Buddha?"

Jōshū said, "It is no-mind."

The monk said, "You say 'mind'; you say 'no-mind.' Am I allowed to choose?"

Jōshū said, "'Mind' and 'no-mind'—it was all your choice. Is there anything you want me to say that will satisfy you?"

127.

A monk asked, "I come from far away. Master, what is your teaching?"

Jōshū said, "I do not tell it to the people."

The monk asked, "Why do you not tell it to the people?"

Jōshū said, "This is my teaching."

The monk said, "If you do not tell it to the people, why should they come across the seas to visit you?"

Jōshū said, "You may be a sea, but I am not."

The monk said, "Well, then, what is there within the sea?"

Jōshū said, "I hooked one fish."

128.

A monk asked, "Who is it that not even the Buddha can approach?"

Jōshū said, "It is not the Buddha."

The monk said, "If one cannot approach him, he is of no use, is he?"

Jōshū said, "If I say to you 'It is not the Buddha, it is not the living, it is not anything,' will you be satisfied then?"

The monk said, "What is it, then?"

Jōshū said, "If it had a name, it would be the Buddha; it would be the living."

The monk said, "You cannot get away with that."

Jōshū said, "We do not see eye to eye, after all."

NOTE: In his quest for the definition of the absolute the monk seems to be losing everything. Why doesn't he name it for himself?

129.

Someone asked, "What is the everyday mind?"

Jōshū said, "It is a badger, a jackal."

NOTE: "Everyday mind" is often used by Jōshū as a synonym for "enlightened mind." A jackal is never unjackal-like.

130.

Someone asked, "What technique should we employ so that we may hear the truth that has never been heard?"

Jōshū said, "Forget about this 'never been heard' thing for a moment. What have you heard up till now?"

A monk said, "I have heard that the teaching says that 'The mirror of suchness takes on the color of the object that is reflected in it.' But what is its original color?"

Jōshū called the monk's name.

The monk answered.

Jōshū said, "Come here."

The monk came and asked again, "What is the original color?"

Jōshū said, "Just follow the color."

NOTE: Never mind the mirror.

A monk asked, "The person with an everyday mind, is he still to be enlightened?"

Jōshū said, "I do not go past that house."

The monk asked, "If that is so, you will let those drown, won't you?"

Jōshū said, "That is some everyday mind!"

When the ordinary man knows he is a sage,

When the sage understands he is an ordinary man.

NOTE: The monk distinguishes between the unenlightened and the enlightened "ordinary" person. Jōshū, who refuses to be taken in by the monk's distinction ("I do not go past that house"), ironically suggests that the very distinction that the monk is making is not of the "ordinary" (i.e., enlightened) kind. When the ordinary man knows he is a sage, when the sage understands he is an ordinary man.

133.

Someone asked, "That which I can attain through my own powers —what is it?"

Jōshū said, "You will never be able to find such a thing."

NOTE: Enlightenment is not the kind of thing one "attains."

134.

Someone asked, "A real practitioner—what kind of person is he?" Jōshū said, "The monk in charge of discipline in this temple is that person."

NOTE: It is Mr. So-and-so.

135.

A monk asked: "I have just come to this monastery. I know nothing about Zen."

Jōshū said, "What is your name?"

The monk said, "Enan."

Jōshū said, "That's some 'know nothing.' "

136.

A monk asked, "If I strive to learn, I end up doing you a disservice. How can I manage not to abuse you?"

Jōshū said, "What is your name?"

The monk said, "Dōkō."

Jōshū said, "Go sit in a quiet place, you parasite."

NOTE: The monk seems to know the principle that the Way is not to be aimed at, but his style is somewhat oversophisticated. Jōshū suggests that the monk become less clever.

A monk asked, "Master, what is your great mind?"

Jōshū said, "There is neither great nor small."

The monk said, "Ah, so this is your great mind, isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "If there were even a bit of this [distinction], it could never be it."

NOTE: The monk understands that the enlightened mind is distinction-free ("neither great nor small"), but he does not realize that this very definition is in itself the worst kind of distinction.

Someone asked, "'Originally, all things are carefree. It is man who makes them agitated.' Whose saying is this?"

Jōshū said, "The instant it comes out, it is dead."

NOTE: If you force your concepts upon this world of trees, lakes, clouds, and birds, you turn yourself into a living corpse.

Someone asked, "The saying, 'It is not Buddha, it is not a thing, it is not life' expresses it [Zen] in terms of negation. How can it be said affirmatively?"

Jōshū said, "Between heaven and earth there is nothing nobler than I."

NOTE: According to Buddhist tradition, when the Buddha was born, he walked seven steps, pointed with one hand at heaven and with the other at the earth, and said, "Between heaven and earth there is nothing nobler than I." Here this saying suggests that enlightenment is entirely a matter of self-realization.

140.

A monk asked, "The halo around the Birushana Buddha—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "I left home when I was young, and since then I have never had any trouble with my eyes."

The monk asked, "Master, don't you work for the sake of the people?"

Jōshū said, "May you forever see the halo around the Birushana Buddha."

NOTE: According to Buddhist tradition, the Birushana Buddha is a Buddha that lives in the Land of Eternally Tranquil Light. Jōshū is not taken in by such superstitions. His eyes wide open, he sees things as they are. As for those who see otherworldly visions of "salvation," they will only learn according to what they see.

141.

A monk asked, "When the Buddha and Daruma were in this world, the Buddha and Daruma transmitted it [Zen]. Now that they are no more, who transmits it?"

Jōshū said, "Old times or present times, it is all in me."

The monk asked, "What is it, then, that you transmit?"

Jōshū said, "Each and every thing; all is born, all dies."

The monk said, "But you cannot just bury [the teaching of] the Buddhas."

Jōshū said, "Then what do you want me to teach?"

142.

Someone asked, "When the holy and the mundane are both left behind—what is it like then?"

Jōshū said, "May you become a man of great virtue. A fellow like me gets in the way of the Buddha and Daruma."

Someone asked, "Having heard of you, I have come from far away.
Why can't I see you?"

Jōshū said, "I am entirely to blame."

Jōshū said, "If I cannot cure my own disease, how could I cure those of others?"

The monk said, "Then there is no one I can rely upon. What should I do?"

Jōshū said, "If you rely upon me, tread heavily upon the earth. If you do not, go east, west—go wherever you please."

NOTE: Trust me but save yourself.

A monk asked, "When the mind does not probe the mind—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Whom are you probing?"

The monk said, "The self."

Jōshū said, "There are not two."

NOTE: When there is self-consciousness, the mind is split in two.
When there is no self-consciousness, the mind is not even one.

A monk asked, "When the world of forms is not seen anymore—what is that like?"

Jōshū pointed at a water jar and said, "What is this?"

The monk said, "A water jar."

Jōshū said, "That's some 'not seeing forms.' "

147.

Someone asked, "What is 'returning to the source'?"
Jōshū said, "The moment you try to do it, you have missed."

NOTE: "The source" is synonymous with "true nature." "Returning to the source" refers to the state of enlightenment.

148.

Someone said, " 'What is not mind, is not wisdom.' Master, I ask for your comment."

Jōshū's answer: "I am no match for you."

NOTE: The quote is based on the saying of the idealistic school of thought: "Wisdom [or the absolute reality] is mind." The inversion of the saying is no more than a philosophy student's smart trick. Jōshū treats it with the irony it deserves.

149.

A monk asked, "What is the very limit?"

Jōshū said, "The very limit."

The monk asked, "Which very limit is it?"

Jōshū said, "It is I. You do not know how to ask."

The monk said, "I am asking, aren't I?"

Jōshū said, "Where is the very limit?"

NOTE: "The very limit" refers to the state in which all conceptual possibilities have been exhausted, and the mind turns to the rock bottom of itself. The monk seems to understand "the very limit" only abstractly. In his response to the monk's questions Jōshū suggests that the monk stop worrying about "the very limit" of others and concern himself instead with the very limit of himself.

150.

A monk asked, "Not covered with even an inch of thread—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "It is not covered with what?"

The monk said, "Not even an inch of thread."

Jōshū said, "Some 'not covered.' "

NOTE: The monk refers to the state in which the mind is clear from the defilement of conceptual thinking. In his response Jōshū suggests that the very consciousness of "clearness" is in itself a defilement.

151.

A monk asked, "Asking for help like a man whose head is on fire—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Be like him."

The monk asked, "In what way?"

Jōshū said, "Do not put yourself in his place."

NOTE: Isn't that man you?

152.

A monk asked, "When all is destroyed in the aeon of the void, who is the 'host' [i.e., subject]?"

Jōshū said, "I am sitting here."

The monk said, "What is the truth that you teach?"

Jōshū said, "I teach what you ask."

153.

A monk asked, "I have heard that the men of old said, 'It is void, it is clear, it shines of itself.' To shine of itself—what does that mean?"

Jōshū said, "It does not mean that something else shines."

The monk said, "When it fails to shine, what then?"

Jōshū said, "You have betrayed yourself."

NOTE: Speculating on whether it shines, all the monk proves is that he does not shine.

154.

Someone asked, "What is 'the very thing' [i.e., enlightenment]?"

Jōshū said, "It is when the first thought has not yet arisen."

155.

A monk asked, "Who is the king of the law [dharma]?"

Jōshū said, "He is the king of the country."

The monk said, "That is not you."

Jōshū said, "In not recognizing a king, you are acting like a rebel."

NOTE: It is you.

156.

Someone asked, "Of the three aspects of Buddha [the physical, the moral, and the metaphysical], which is the original one?"

Jōshū said, "Do not leave out any of them."

157.

A monk asked, "Who was the founder of Zen in this country?"

Jōshū said, "Ever since Daruma came here, all are."

The monk said, "Master, where do you stand in the order of the patriarchs?"

Jōshū said, "I do not fall within the order."

The monk asked, "Where are you?"

Jōshū said, "Inside your ear."

A monk asked, "It is said that a clear-eyed person sees all. Does he see form?"

Jōshū said, "Break it into pieces."

The monk said, "How should one break it?"

Jōshū said, "If you use force, it will fly back into your face."

NOTE: Jōshū suggests that the "breaking to pieces" of the world of forms (phenomena) is to be achieved not by denying it but by accepting it.

Enwrapped in billows of white clouds
 I do not see the white clouds
 absorbed in the sound of flowing water,
 I do not hear the flowing water.

A monk asked, "The teaching of the Buddhas—whom is it for?"

Jōshū said, "It is for now."

The monk said, "Unfortunately I do not understand."

Jōshū said, "Whose fault is it?"

The monk said, "How should I cope with this?"

Jōshū said, "There is no one who can cope with it now."

The monk said, "If that is so, there is nothing I can rely upon."

Jōshū said, "Do not take me lightly."

A monk asked, "What does the enlightened one do?"

Jōshū said, "He truly practices the Way."

The monk asked, "Master, do you practice the Way?"

Jōshū said, "I put on my robe, I eat my rice."

The monk said, "To put on one's robe, to eat one's rice are ordinary, everyday things. Master, do you practice the Way?"

Jōshū said, "You try and say it then. What am I doing everyday?"

161.

The official Sai asked, "Can even a great master go to hell?"

Jōshū said, "I lead the way."

Sai said, "But why should an excellent master, of all people, go to hell?"

Jōshū said, "If I don't go, how can I meet you there?"

162.

A monk asked, "When there is only a shade of difference—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Like heaven and earth—far apart."

The monk said, "When there is not even a shade of difference—what then?"

Jōshū said, "Like heaven and earth—far apart."

NOTE: If one admits even the slightest difference between things, one contradicts the concept of the all-encompassing void. Yet if one endeavors to view the world as One, one is taken in by the difference between "difference" and "unity." As long as one speculates on this "problem," one's mind is "like heaven and earth," split in two.

163.

A monk asked, "What is the 'never-sleeping eye'?"

Jōshū said, "The common eye—the eye of the flesh." Then he added, "I have not yet attained the heavenly eye, but this is the power of my eye of the flesh."

The monk said, "What is 'the sleeping eye'?"

Jōshū said, "It is the eye of the Buddha—the eye of truth."

NOTE: According to the traditional Buddhist terminology "the sleeping eye" refers to the state of ignorance, whereas "the never-sleeping eye" refers to the wisdom of Buddha. Jōshū ridicules this "double eye" theory by turning it upside-down. After all, what is the use of distinguishing between a worldly eye and a godly one?

[Enō's master, Gunin, decided that Enō would take his place as the next master, and as proof of the authority he invested in Enō, he gave him his cloak and bowl. Displeased with the choice, the other monks chased after Enō, and near Mount Daiyūrei they caught up with him. The monk called Myō was among those chasing Enō. Upon seeing Myō, Enō threw his cloak and bowl on the rock and said, "This cloak represents faith; if it is in your power to lift it, I shall let you have it." Myō tried to lift it, but it was as unmovable as a mountain. Bewildered and frightened, Myō said, "I came here to look for the Way. I did not come for the cloak. Master, I beg you to teach me."]

A monk asked, "Why was Myō unable to lift the cloak?"

Jōshū lifted up the hem of the monk's cloak and said, "Where did you get this from?"

The monk said, "That is not what I am asking."

Jōshū said, "If that's how you are, you won't be able to lift it either."

NOTE: The historical background of this koan centers around the division of Zen into the northern and southern sects during the seventh century A.D. Zen chronicles written on the process that led to the split report various dramatic events indicating the superiority of Enō (638-713) over his rival and fellow novice Jinshū (606-706), the founder of the northern sect. The purpose of this legend is apparently to prove Enō the legitimate successor of his master, Gunin (602-674). In his response to the monk's question Jōshū suggests that cloaks can, of course, be lifted. Instead of minding others' cloaks, the monk had better look after his own.

Someone asked, "Not mistaking the way—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Know your mind. See into your true nature. This is 'not mistaking the way.' "

166.

Someone asked, "Does the clear mirror reflect?"

Jōshū said, "I wouldn't say it doesn't. But what is this 'mirror'?"

NOTE: "The clear mirror" suggests the enlightened mind, which reflects everything as it is. It would be a mistake, however, to regard the mirror as a subject ("self"). It is only when there is no subject that things are clearly reflected.

167.

A monk asked, "A pure seedling that has no root—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Where do you come from?"

The monk said, "From Taigen."

Jōshū said, "That's some 'no root.' "

NOTE: Ironically, the characters of the name "Taigen" stand for "thick root" or "thick source." The enlightened one may leave no traces, but he does come from somewhere.

168.

A monk asked, "When I wish to become a Buddha—what then?"

Jōshū said, "You have set yourself quite a task, haven't you?"

The monk said, "When there is no effort—what then?"

Jōshū said, "Then you are a Buddha already."

169.

A monk asked, "I am a stupid person: floating, sinking, floating, sinking. How can I be released [from this world of suffering]?"

Jōshū just kept sitting silently.

The monk said, "Master, am I not sitting here, appealing to you?"

Jōshū said, "Where on earth is it that you are floating and sinking?"

NOTE: The monk is where he imagines himself to be. If he did not view himself as trapped in a world of suffering, he would have been released already.

170.

A monk asked, "It is said that 'It is not in the ordinary, it is not in the holy.' How can one avoid both?"

Jōshū said, "When you have exhausted both, I shall answer you."

The monk said, "How do you do?"

Jōshū said, "This greeting—where does it originate? Here, it originates in me. In town, where does it originate?"

The monk said, "Master, why don't you decide that for yourself?"

Jōshū said, "I shall teach you. Why don't you say, 'There is a pleasant breeze today'?"

NOTE: There is indeed nothing "holy" or "unholy" in the monk's "How do you do?" However, it smells of a Zen show. Had the monk been less conscious of the master, he could have done better.

171.

A monk asked, "A sendai [one who because of his bad karma cannot attain enlightenment]—what is he like?"

Jōshū said, "I will answer you. But will you believe?"

The monk said, "You are being very careful with your words. Why shouldn't I believe?"

Jōshū said, "Try and search for even one sendai. He is very hard to find."

172.

A monk asked, "A man who is absolutely devoid of shame—where should one put him?"

Jōshū said, "Not here."

The monk said, "If such a man should show up, what would you do?"

Jōshū said, "Kick him out."

NOTE: The freedom of the shameless is not the freedom of enlightenment.

173.

Someone asked, "When the working of enlightenment does not show—what then?"

Jōshū said, "I shall not say that there is no working. But who shows?"

NOTE: Jōshū suggests that the problem is not whether the working of enlightenment shows. If the subject ("self") does not show, enlightenment is there all right. The same idea is expressed in the Chinese saying "A skillful craftsman leaves no traces."

174.

A monk asked, "When all is destroyed in the aeon of the void, will the people still practice the Way?"

Jōshū said, "What is it that you call 'the aeon of the void'?"

The monk said, "It is not anything."

Jōshū said, "It is only then that there is practice of the Way. What is it that you call 'the aeon of the void'?"

NOTE: According to Buddhist tradition the world goes through four *kalpas* ("aeons"): (1) the aeon of formation, (2) the aeon of continuance, (3) the aeon of destruction, and (4) the aeon of emptiness or the void, in which nothing exists. Whereas the monk refers to the cosmological "aeon of the void," Jōshū suggests that it is only where there is "void" that everything is. "Not anything" is now.

Someone asked, "What does 'renouncing the world' mean?" Jōshū said, "Not striving for fame, not pursuing corruption."

A monk asked, "Without pointing at any particular doctrine, Master, what is your teaching?"

Jōshū said, "I do not preach the teaching of Bōzan [a center of Taoist sects]."

The monk asked, "If you do not preach the teaching of Bōzan, what, then, is your teaching?"

Jōshū said, "I have told you already that I do not preach the teaching of Bōzan."

The monk said, "So that's what it [your Zen] is, isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "So far I have never showed it to the people."

NOTE: Where you do not try to get hold of it as "this" or "that," there it is.

A monk asked, "What is 'the one path of deliverance right in front of one's eyes'?"

Jōshū said, "Not two, not three."

The monk said, "I may then proceed on this 'right in front of the eyes' path?"

Jōshū said, "Proceeding thus, you will digress a thousand miles, ten thousand miles."

NOTE: Buddha nature may indeed be in the "right in front of one's eyes" situation. However, since the monk is overconscious of this principle, he is bound to miss the situation whenever it presents itself.

178.

A monk asked, "What is above even Birushana Buddha?"

Jōshū said, "I am below your feet."

The monk said, "Master, why are you below my feet?"

Jōshū said, "Because you do not understand 'above' in the first place."

179.

A monk asked, "Being one [with the Way]—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "It is nothing but you not being one."

The monk said, "Not being one—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "You should be able to pick that up from what I just said."

NOTE: If the monk did not look for the Way outside himself, he would not deviate from it.

180.

Someone asked, "Your mind, directly to the point—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "Stop! Stop! There is no need to explain; my teaching is subtle and hard to understand."

181.

A monk asked, "Perfectly clear, without even the tiniest speck of dirt—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "To fall into the pit, to drop into the ditch."

The monk said, "Where does the fault lie?"

Jōshū said, "It is you who threw the man in."

NOTE: In dividing the world between "clean" and "dirty," the monk has dirtied himself.

182.

Someone asked, "When the one heading for deliverance vows to strive for the utmost enlightenment—how about that?"
Jōshū said, "When not yet delivered, you are used by enlightenment. When delivered, you use it."

183.

A practitioner saw the stick in Jōshū's hand and said, "Is it true that a Buddha does not refuse people's wishes?"
Jōshū said, "It is true."
The practitioner said, "I would like to have the stick that is in your hand. May I?"
Jōshū said, "An honorable man does not take away something cherished by someone else."
The practitioner said, "I am not a gentleman."
Jōshū said, "And I am not a Buddha."

184.

When Jōshū was outside of the monastery, he saw an old woman planting in a field. He said, "If you met with a fierce tiger, what would you do?"
The old woman said, "There is nothing in the world that bothers me."
Jōshū said, "Oh!"
The old woman said, "Oh!"
Jōshū said, "There is still this, isn't there?"

NOTE: There is still showing off.

185.

A practitioner was taking his leave. He said, "I have caused you much trouble while I was here. I have nothing with which to repay

you for your kindness. Someday, when I become a donkey, I will want to repay you."

Jōshū said, "Tell me, then, how will you obtain the saddle?"

NOTE: By declaring his indifference to what he is reborn as in a future life, the monk shows off his knowledge of Zen. However, being too much of a Zen monk, he makes too learned a donkey.

186.

Jōshū arrived at Master Dōgo's place. The moment he entered the hall, Dōgo said, "Here comes Nansen's arrow."

Jōshū said, "Look at the arrow!"

Dōgo said, "Missed!"

Jōshū said, "Hit!"

NOTE: In "Here comes Nansen's arrow" Dōgo provokes Jōshū into showing what he has, not from his master Nansen, but of his own. Jōshū picks up the arrow simile and asserts himself through it.

187.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said, "A metal [statue of] Buddha melts in the furnace. A wooden Buddha is consumed by fire. A clay Buddha dissolves in water. A true Buddha dwells within. Wisdom, nirvana, absolute reality, Buddha nature—all these are but a covering of the body. You might as well call them suffering and illusion. If you do not care about them, suffering and illusion cease to exist.

"What, then, is the point of realization? When the mind does not arise, everything is flawless. Just follow what is true, and sit for twenty or thirty years. If you do not attain realization, then you may cut my head off.

"In vain do you attempt to take hold of a dream, a phantom, a flower in the sky. If your mind does not diverge, nothing will. It is not something that can be attained from the outside. Why, then, should you be possessed by anything? What would be the point of being like a sheep that picks up things at random and puts them in its mouth?

"When I met with Master Yakuzan, he said, 'If anybody puts a question to me, I will just make him shut his mouth.' I will likewise say, 'Shut your mouths.' If you pursue the self, you are defiled. If you do not pursue the self, you are pure—you are just like a hunting dog that only jumps here and there, looking for something to bite at.

"Where is the truth? The thousands, the tens of thousands in search of the Buddha are but so many people. Try and seek the real ones. You will not find even one. If it is the 'enlightenment void' you are after, do not yield to the malady of the mind. It is the most difficult to cure.

"It [“suchness,” “Buddha nature”] was before the world came into existence. When the world perishes, it will not be destroyed. Once you have seen eye to eye with me, you will not turn into a different person. It is just you, yourself. Why, then, should you look for it outside of yourself? Do not peer around or contort your face, lest you miss it."

188.

Someone asked, "When the hundred bones are smashed to pieces and only the one thing remains in its eternal purity—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "The wind is rising again this morning."

NOTE: "The hundred bones" refers to the world of things. While the monk is searching for the "eternal Buddha nature" beyond the world of things, Jōshū suggests that there is nothing wanting in the everyday world.

189.

A monk said, "I will not ask about the various Buddhist doctrines. But what is the meaning of 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "The cow has given birth. Take good care of it."

The monk said, "What is the meaning of this?"

Jōshū said, "I myself don't know."

NOTE: Milking the cow, feeding the calf. That's all there is to do. What is the problem?

190.

Someone asked, "When [messengers from] all countries come to the court—what then?"

Jōshū said, "When you meet with somebody, do not call out to him."

NOTE: The "[messengers from] all countries" seems to refer to the various things ("object") that are reflected in the consciousness ("subject"). Jōshū suggests that it is not that "nothing" appears in the enlightened mind; whatever appears is "no thing."

I meet with him but know not who he is
I converse with him but do not know his name.

191.

A monk asked, "During each of the twenty-four hours, how can I choose the right way?"

Jōshū said, "The muddy waters of Naiga River [the river leading to hell] are swiftly streaming to the west."

The monk said, "Will I be able to meet with Monju?"

Jōshū said, "You blind fool, where have you gone?"

NOTE: The Kegon Sutra tells the story of Zenzaidōji, who is searching for enlightenment. He meets with various people and asks them to show him the Way. His last meeting is with Monju (the Buddha of Wisdom), through whom he attains enlightenment. Before his meeting with Monju, Zenzaidōji crosses a river. In his answers Jōshū suggests that enlightenment is not a matter of a pilgrimage. It is flowing with the river, not against it.

Someone asked, "The dōjō [a monastery, or the place where the Way is practiced]—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "You come from the dōjō, you leave from the dōjō. You are that very thing. Where is the place that is not it?"

A monk asked, "When even a bud has not yet come out—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "If you just smell it, your head will split."

The monk said, "If you do not smell it, what then?"

Jōshū said, "I have no time to idle away like this."

NOTE: "When even a bud has not yet come out" refers to the "pure" aspect of the world (*mu, kū*—emptiness or void), which is equal and distinction-free. Jōshū suggests that such a realm may be "too pure" for the human. When the monk interprets Jōshū's answer as a rejection of the ideal of enlightenment, Jōshū claims that he is too busy in the affairs of this world to figure out whether he is enlightened. If the monk were not taken in by speculation, perhaps he could smell it too.

A monk asked, "What is quantity?"

Jōshū said, "One, two, three, four, five."

The monk said, "What is it that is not bound by quantity?"

Jōshū said, "One, two, three, four, five."

NOTE: If the mind is not taken by distinctions, the world is neither "many" nor "one," neither "changing" nor "eternal":

When you are really master of the myriad forms,
throughout the four seasons there is no withering, no decay.

195.

A monk asked, "What is the realm in which there is neither day nor night?"

Jōshū said, "Is it day now? Is it night now?"

The monk said, "I am not asking about now."

Jōshū said, "You cannot do away with me."

NOTE: It is said that the enlightened mind realizes that the world is "formless." This does not mean, however, that day and night no longer exist. When it gets dark, Jōshū goes to sleep. Is this the realm of forms? Is this the formless?

196.

A monk asked, "Mixing without becoming impure—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "I eat only vegetable food; I always adhere to the precepts."

The monk said, "Can one elevate oneself in this way?"

Jōshū said, "You would trespass against the law."

NOTE: The monk knows only the "upward" law. If he knew the "straightforward law," he would not be bothered by the possibility of "becoming impure."

197.

Someone asked, "What is the word [teaching] of the men of old?"

Jōshū said, "Listen! Listen!"

198.

Someone asked, "What is my true nature?"

Jōshū said, "If that is what you say, what is it that you dislike?"

NOTE: "True" nature implies the existence of a "false" nature.

Jōshū asks what else is "false," thus suggesting that "everything is real"—there is no need to look for anything special, the "true" as opposed to the "false."

199.

Someone asked, "'All existences return to the One.' Where does the One return to?"

Jōshū said, "When I was in the Sei District, I made a cotton dress. It weighed seven pounds."

NOTE: The one returns to the seven.

Seven becomes one: all things are God.
One becomes seven: God is all things.

200.

Someone asked, "What is right before one's eyes?"

Jōshū said, "You are what is right before one's eyes."

201.

Someone asked, "Who is the one that transcends even Buddha?"

Jōshū said, "That man leading his oxen—it is he."

202.

A monk asked, "What is the point of extreme immediacy?"

Jōshū said, "If I asked this question, what would you say?"

The monk said, "I do not know."

Jōshū said, "I shall tell you. Hastily put on your shoes, stand on the water, and gallop your horse up to the capital, Choan, without wetting even the tip of your shoes."

NOTE: In "extreme immediacy" the monk refers to the "working" of the enlightened mind. The point of Jōshū's answer is not so much in the rapid movement as in the immediate, carefree movement that leaves no traces of self-consciousness. One who can move like this has "no weight" of his own, and he will therefore not "sink into the water."

203.

Someone asked, "When the mountains close in on you on every side, from all four directions—what then?"

Jōshū said, "It is the pathless that is Jōshū."

NOTE: The mountains "closing in" suggest the vicissitudes of life that dictate our fate. Yet if we do not expect anything, we do not form a path of our own, different from the path of nature.

204.

Someone asked, "Master, how old are you?"

Jōshū said, "The beads of the rosary—there is no end to counting."

205.

Someone asked, "Master, who transmitted the teaching to you?"

Jōshū said, "Jūshin."

NOTE: Jūshin is Jōshū's "monk name" (i.e., the name a Buddhist monk receives upon joining the order). In giving his own name instead of that of his master (Nansen), Jōshū suggests that "the teaching" does not come from the outside.

206.

Someone asked, "If people ask, 'What is the teaching of Jōshū?,' what should I say?"

Jōshū said, "Salt is expensive, rice is cheap."

NOTE: In ancient China, salt, being a monopoly of the state, was one of the most expensive commodities. The point of Jōshū's answer lies in stating the commonplace.

207.

Someone asked, "What is Buddha?"

Jōshū said, "Are you Buddha?"

208.

Someone asked, "What is a monk?"

Jōshū said, "How could you come here to see me?"

209.

Someone asked, "What is the link between the Buddha and Daruma?"

Jōshū said, "Nothing leaks out."

210.

A monk said, "Master, please teach me about the source."

Jōshū said, "The source is flawless."

The monk said, "The realization of this—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "The one who realizes, knows."

The monk said, "But what is it like then?"

Jōshū said, "You define it for me."

211.

Someone asked, "When absolutely pure, with nothing mixed in—how is it then?"

Jōshū said, "That's a fine question!"

212.

A monk asked, "What is the point of 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "It is the leg of the chair."

The monk said, "That is what it is, isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "If that is what it is, you may remove it and take it with you."

NOTE: For the same theme, see koan no. 12.

213.

Someone asked, "When perfectly clear, without even the tiniest speck of dirt—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "There is no room in my place for such a rascal."

214.

Someone asked, "When the phoenix flies, yet does not get there—what then?"

Jōshū said, "Where did it start out from?"

NOTE: The flight of the phoenix seems to suggest the search for enlightenment. If one realizes that one has never left one's place of origin, one is right there.

Someone asked, "In the state of realization, without even the tiniest speck of dust—what is that like?"
 Jōshū said, "Each and every thing is there."

A monk asked, "What is the one word?"
 Jōshū said, "O."
 The monk repeated his question.
 Jōshū said, "I'm not deaf, you know."

NOTE: The monk asks for the "one word" (i.e., the ultimate truth); Jōshū answers with one word. ("O" is meaningless; it could be any one word.)

Someone asked, "Does a newborn baby have the six senses?"
 Jōshū said, "Playing ball on rapid water."

NOTE: The Buddhist doctrine on the "person" views the psycho-physical organism as a complex interactive system of six senses — the five physical senses plus the "mind" (or "thought") sense. The point of such an analysis is to do away with the concept of "self" (as a continuous "substance" above and beyond the incessant stream of personal events). Jōshū's answer implies that just as one cannot "play ball on rapid water" (there being no solid ground), there is no substratum ("self") uniting the flow of the personal events. All there is are the events, one after the other.

Someone asked, "Master, what is your style?"
 Jōshū said, "I left home as a child, paying no heed to clothes, food, or dwelling. I have been living in a different way from the common one."

219.

Someone said, "Please, Master, detached from words—say it." Jōshū said, "I am always within."

NOTE: Being one with his words, how can he be attached to them?

220.

Someone asked, "How does it come about that the excellent physician Henjaku falls ill?"

Jōshū said, "Henjaku never leaves his sickbed."

NOTE: Legend has it that Henjaku could heal even the dead. Jōshū suggests that the patient-physician metaphor is of no use. Whatever there is to be healed, it cannot be healed from the outside.

221.

Someone asked, "The white cow outside—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "That beast!"

NOTE: In the traditional story (see koan no. 73), the cow symbolizes the teaching of Buddha. Here Jōshū refuses to be taken in by the moral of the story and simply responds to "cow."

222.

A nun asked, "Where there is contriving, everything turns into rubbish. Master, without being taken in by contriving, please answer." Jōshū scolded her: "Fetch some water, put it in the kettle, and boil it."

223.

Someone asked, "What is the 'perfect wisdom'?"
Jōshū said, "The 'great perfect wisdom.' "

224.

Someone asked, "The man-eating lion—what is it like?"
Jōshū said, "Oh, Buddha! The holy law! The holy ones! Don't eat me!"

NOTE: In "the man-eating lion" the monk seems to suggest the powerful "working" of the enlightened person. Jōshū ignores the metaphorical suggestion of the monk's words and "naively" reacts to "lion."

225.

Someone said, "Without using words, Master, please say it."
Jōshū coughed.

226.

Someone asked, "How can one go through life without abusing those of old and without being ungrateful?"
Jōshū said, "What about you?"

NOTE: Jōshū suggests that the monk must find the answer by himself and in himself.

227.

Someone asked, "What is 'the one word'?"
Jōshū said, "What are you saying?"

228.

Someone asked, "What if I say that the Buddha alone is virtuous?" Jōshū said, "That is the word of the devil."

229.

Someone asked, "What is enlightenment?" Jōshū said, "This [question] in itself indicates a sendai [an ignorant person]."

NOTE: Overconsciousness of "enlightenment" is in itself a kind of moral defilement.

230.

Someone asked, "When in the state of nirvana, free from causality—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "I am far behind you."

231.

A monk asked, "A temple—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "What else is there?"

The monk said, "Those inside the temple—what are they like?"

Jōshū said, "Me and you."

232.

Someone asked, "Two dragons quarrel over a precious stone.

Which one will get it?"

Jōshū said, "I am just an onlooker."

NOTE: The two dragons suggest the pupil and the master facing each other; the precious stone indicates enlightenment. Jōshū will have nothing to do with an "enlightenment" that can be possessed by anyone.

Someone asked, "The person detached from cause and effect—what is he like?"

Jōshū said, "If you hadn't asked me, I really wouldn't have noticed."

NOTE: If you are just what you happen to be, are you attached?
Are you detached?

Someone asked, "The blind men pass their hands over an elephant, each describing a different part. What is the real elephant like?"

Jōshū said, "Nothing is false. You just don't know it."

NOTE: This story appears in the Nirvana Sutra. When blind men passed their hands over an elephant, each described the elephant differently: the one who touched the elephant's ear said it was an umbrella, he who touched the head said it was a stone, he who touched a leg said it was a tree, et cetera. The story suggests that since we never have a full view of reality, our knowledge of it is always partial and false. In "Nothing is false" Jōshū rejects the distinction between "appearance and reality" implied in the story.

A monk asked, "What is 'the ultimate word'?"

Jōshū coughed.

The monk said, "That's it, isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "Alas, they won't even let me cough."

236.

A monk asked, "The great sea contains many rivers, doesn't it?"
Jōshū said, "The great sea says it does not know."
The monk said, "Why doesn't it know?"
Jōshū said, "After all, it does not say, 'I contain many rivers.' "

237.

Someone asked, "Who is the master of Birushana Buddha?"
Jōshū said, "Birushana Buddha! Birushana Buddha!"

238.

A monk asked, "Do the various Buddhas have a master?"
Jōshū said, "They do."
The monk said, "Who is the master of the various Buddhas?"
Jōshū said, "Amida Buddha! Amida Buddha!"

NOTE: Amida Buddha (the Buddha of Infinite Light, worshipped by the Pure Land sects) is really in no way superior to other Buddhas. Jōshū gives the monk a sarcastic answer, however, since his question indicates he is looking for the "absolute."

239.

A monk asked, "Who is my master?"
Jōshū said, "The clouds are passing between the mountains. Falling into the valley, the water makes no sound."
The monk said, "That is not what I was asking."
Jōshū said, "It [nature] is your master. You just don't recognize it."

A monk asked, "The others say it [“suchness”] with their mouths. Master, how do you teach it to the people?"

Ājōshū banged his heel against the stove.

The monk said, "So that's what it is, isn't it?"

Ājōshū said, "What a fine understanding of my heel!"

A monk asked, "When not taking the Main Way—what then?"

Ājōshū said, "You damned salt smuggler!"

The monk asked, "When taking the Main Way instead—what then?"

Ājōshū said, "Give me back my identification card."

NOTE: Ājōshū ignores the religious "Way" the monk is referring to and describes instead the ways of the world. In ancient China salt was a monopoly of the state. In his answers Ājōshū demonstrates the various "ways" of the salt trade.

A monk asked, "What is the original self?"

Ājōshū said, "Once you know me, it is in no way different."

The monk said, "If that is so, then it must lead a different life from yours."

Ājōshū said, "Not only in this life—in a thousand lives, in ten thousand lives, you will still not know me."

NOTE: Ājōshū seems to suggest that the "original self" is in no way different from the usual everyday self. The monk criticizes Ājōshū, claiming that the statement that two things are the same still leaves one with the consciousness of "two." However, he forgets that that consciousness is his, not Ājōshū's.

243.

Someone asked, "What is the meaning of "Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "How long ago was it that I hung the gourd-bottle on the eastern wall?"

NOTE: Right now, I'm the founder.

244.

A monk asked, "When it is not quite square or round—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "It is not square. It is not round."

The monk said, "Then what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "Is it square? Is it round?"

NOTE: Jōshū refuses to deal with the "formless" ("void") in a metaphysical manner. The realization of "void" is not anything beyond the world of forms. When something appears neither square nor round, he suggests, just get closer and take a better look!

245.

Someone asked, "Meeting with a 'man of the Way'—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Serving food in a lacquer bowl."

NOTE: Like any meeting—eating rice, drinking tea.

A monk asked, "Why can't I see the truth?"

Jōshū said, "It isn't that the truth is not there; you just can't see it."

The monk said, "What is it, then?"

Jōshū said, "Missing the truth."

NOTE: If you didn't look for it, you wouldn't miss it.

A monk asked, "Practicing the Way, yet not arriving at the goal; asking about the Way, yet still not arriving at it—what then?"

Jōshū said, "Arriving or not arriving—a follower of the Way cares for that no more than for spit."

The monk said, "This very thing [not caring]—what is it like?"

Jōshū spat on the floor.

A monk asked, "What is the meaning of 'Our founder came from the West'?"

Jōshū said, "Even if you did not bring up this 'meaning' thing, you would not fare much better."

The monk said, "What is 'the origin of all things'?"

Jōshū said, "Four eyes looking at one another. There is no subject other than that."

NOTE: You and I.

Someone asked, "The person who possesses neither form nor rank—does he understand?"

Jōshū said, "Right now! Do you understand?"

250.

A monk asked, "I intend to go south to study Buddhism—what do you think?"

Jōshū said, "Going south, when you see a place where there is Buddha, quickly run past it; when you see a place where there is no Buddha, don't stay there."

The monk said, "But that means there is nothing I can rely on."

Jōshū said, "The fluff of the willow. The fluff of the willow."

NOTE: What does the leaf in the wind rely on?"

251.

Someone asked, "What is the point of 'absolute immediacy'?"

Jōshū said, "A question; an answer."

252.

Someone asked, "You refuse to have any recourse to words. But you do rely on 'now,' don't you?"

Jōshū said, "If I responded to your words, how would you take it?"

NOTE: Jōshū refuses to fall into the trap. If he did, the person questioning him might gain a philosopher but would lose a master.

253.

A monk asked, "Master, what is your style?"

Jōshū said, "In boundless space [i.e., the void] there are myriad people."

The monk said, "Please, Master, don't answer any more."

Jōshū said, "That is just what I ought to do."

NOTE: In essence Jōshū states that "the myriad things are void, and the void is myriad things." The monk ironically suggests that Jōshū

may be right, yet his "style" leaves much to be desired. Jōshū himself admits that this time he may have said too much.

254.

Someone asked, "Two dragons quarrel over a precious stone. Which one will get it?"

Jōshū said, "The one who loses lacks nothing; the one who gains does not need it."

NOTE: The "two dragons" simile stands for the pupil and the master arguing over "enlightenment." Jōshū suggests that there is nothing to lose and nothing to gain.

255.

A layman presented Jōshū with a robe and asked, "By wearing such clothes, will you not be betraying those of old?"

Jōshū threw down his stick and said, "Is this of old? Is this of now?"

256.

[It is told that when Master Gozu still lived as a hermit in the mountains, birds used to drop flowers by his feet. But after Gozu met with master Dōshin and attained enlightenment, the birds came no more.]

A monk asked, "When Gozu had not yet seen Dōshin—how was it then?"

Jōshū said, "Plenty of firewood, plenty of water."

The monk asked, "How was it after he saw him?"

Jōshū said, "Plenty of firewood, plenty of water."

257.

A monk asked Jōshū, "What is my self?"
Jōshū said, "Have you eaten your rice gruel?"
The monk said, "I have."
Jōshū said, "Then go and wash your bowl."

258.

A monk asked, "Who is the master of Birushana Buddha?"
Jōshū said, "Has the white camel arrived?"
The monk said, "It has."
Jōshū said, "Then lead it away and feed it some grass."

NOTE: The "white camel," as something rare and extraordinary, suggests "enlightenment." The monk is quick to declare that it is there, at which point Jōshū brings the situation back into perspective.

259.

Someone asked, "The wisdom attained without the help of a master—what is it like?"
Jōshū said, "I haven't taught you that, have I?"

260.

Someone asked, "What is the perfectly fitting 'one word'?"
Jōshū said, "You have given yourself away."

261.

A monk asked, "Without having recourse to words, is it possible to ask [questions]?"
Jōshū said, "This is indeed the best situation."

The monk said, "Well then, Master, please ask!"
Jōshū said, "I don't recall having said anything."

262.

[When Daruma came to China, Master Eka asked to become his disciple. When his pleas were ignored, he cut off his arm and presented it to Daruma.]

A monk asked, "Master Eka cutting off his arm—what kind of act was that?"

Jōshū said, "Exerting oneself to the utmost."
The monk said, "Whom was this sacrifice for?"
Jōshū said, "For those that came after."

263.

Someone asked, "During the day there is sunshine. During the night there is moonshine. What is 'god shine'?"

Jōshū said, "Sunshine and moonshine."

264.

A monk asked, "The point of asking a question—what is it?"
Jōshū said, "Mistake."

The monk asked, "The point of asking no questions—what about that?"

Jōshū said, "You can see it in my previous word."

265.

Someone asked, "What does a great man look like?"
Jōshū stroked his own cheek, crossed his hands, and straightened up.

266.

Someone asked, "Naturalness—what is that?"

Jōshū said, "This [asking such a question] is in itself unnatural."

267.

Someone asked, "What is the meaning of 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "A cow broke out of its stall."

268.

Someone said, "I have come here from far away. I beg you to teach me."

Jōshū said, "You have just entered the gate. Well then, let me spit in your face."

NOTE: Why don't you look for it right where you are?

269.

A monk asked, "What is the one way of becoming detached?"

Jōshū said, "Has the boat from Wainan arrived yet?"

The monk said, "I don't know."

Jōshū said, "Oh, I'm so glad. It has arrived."

NOTE: "The one way of becoming detached," Jōshū suggests, is to attain enlightenment. When the monk responds to the metaphor by saying he doesn't know whether he is enlightened, Jōshū assures him that this means he is.

A monk asked, "Does the oak tree also have Buddha nature?"
 Jōshū said, "It does."

The monk asked, "When will it attain enlightenment?"

Jōshū said, "It is waiting for the sky to fall."

The monk said, "When will the sky fall?"

Jōshū said, "It is waiting for the oak tree to attain enlightenment."

A monk asked, "What is the meaning of 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "Why do you come to this temple cursing me?"

The monk said, "What have I done wrong?"

Jōshū said, "Being in this temple, I cannot curse you."

NOTE: Jōshū often deals harshly with questions on the meaning of Zen. In this case Jōshū is annoyed not only by the content of the question, but also by the monk's attitude.

Someone asked, "What is the meaning of 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "Moss growing on one's front teeth."

NOTE: Jōshū suggests that the monk had better shut up.

A monk asked, "When a poor person comes, what will you give him?"

Jōshū said, "You are not poor."

The monk said, "But here I am, asking you. Will you not answer me?"

Jōshū said, "Just be thoroughly poor."

NOTE: Through the metaphor of "a poor person" the monk seems to be asking Jōshū to teach him. Jōshū suggests that if the monk had less of his own, he could be given more.

274.

Someone asked, "Why is it that Muhenshin Buddha could not attain any insight into 'reality as it is'?"

Jōshū said, "It is like looking through thin silk."

NOTE: The Nirvana Sutra tells of Muhenshin Buddha, who came to hear Buddha's sermons yet still could not attain enlightenment. Jōshū suggests that if one does not see reality as it is, it is because one does not look directly to the point.

275.

Someone asked, "Who can bring the nectar of the heavens?"

Jōshū said, "Thank you for bringing it to me."

276.

Someone asked, "Who has transcended heaven and earth?"

Jōshū said, "If you come across such a one, let me know immediately."

277.

Someone asked, "What is a temple?"

Jōshū said, "Three gates and the main hall."

Someone asked, "That which is neither born nor destroyed—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "It is not born originally; right now it is likewise indestructible."

NOTE: The question refers to some immutable "essence" beyond the world of change, whereas Jōshū's answer, through "right now," suggests that "essence" is identical with the world just as it appears.

Someone asked, "Who is Jōshū's master?"

Jōshū said, "It is the king."

NOTE: Jōshū suggests here that there is no need to distinguish between the "holy" and the "secular." His answer is "naive," because the characters of Jōshū's name also stand for Jō Prefecture. The master of Jō Prefecture is, naturally, the king.

Someone asked, "Being on the verge, that point of absolute immediacy—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Pissing is a small thing to do, but I have to do it myself."

A monk asked, "The sixty-six-foot-long golden body of Buddha—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "Put on a fresh collar."

The monk said, "I do not understand."

Jōshū said, "If you don't understand, ask somebody to cut it for you."

NOTE: Jōshū suggests that instead of worrying about the Buddha that is a statue, the monk had better look after the Buddha that is himself.

282.

A monk asked, "Who is higher than the Buddha?"

Jōshū got off the Zen chair, looked the monk up and down, and said, "This fellow is indeed huge and high in stature. You could cut him in three and there would still be enough. What is the point of this "higher, lower" kind of question?"

283.

A nun asked, "What is the innermost mind?"

Jōshū pinched the nun's hand.

The nun said, "Master, you are still that way, aren't you?"

Jōshū said, "It is you who are that way."

284.

A monk asked, "Master, you have received such a great offering from the king. What will you give him in return?"

Jōshū said, "Pray to Buddha."

The monk said, "Any pauper can pray to Buddha."

Jōshū said, "Call the attendants, and have them give this man a penny."

285.

Someone asked, "Master, what is your style?"

Jōshū said, "The folding screen may be worn out, but the frame is still there."

Someone asked, "The 'immutable essence'—what is that?" Jōshū said, "You try and say it: Those wild ducks, will they fly east? Will they fly west?"

Someone asked, "What is the meaning of 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "Where did you get this information?"

[The monk Daiji came from the west to the capital. He said he possessed the unusual power of being able to read minds. Emperor Daisō ordered his Zen teacher Etchū to test the monk. The moment the monk met the master, he bowed and stepped aside to the right. The master said, "Are you able to read minds?" "To some extent," said the monk in reply. "Tell me where I am at this moment," the master said. "You, the teacher of a nation—how can you go to the West River to see the boat race?" "Tell me where I am at this moment," the master said again. "You, the teacher of a nation—how can you stand on Tenshin Bridge and watch monkeys performing tricks?" "Tell me where I am at this moment," the master said a third time. This time the monk was unable to find the master's whereabouts. The master scolded, "You sly fox! What's happened to that mind-reading ability of yours?" The monk did not answer. The master then said to the emperor, "Your Majesty, do not be taken in by foreigners!"]

Someone asked, "It is said that in his third trial, Daiji failed to find Etchū's whereabouts. Where on earth was Etchū?"

Jōshū said, "He was inside Daiji's nostrils."

NOTE: This story, which appears in *Keitokundetōroku*, takes place in China; the monk Daiji (or Daijisanzō) was an Indian Buddhist who possessed the magical art of omniscience. Daiji can read Etchū's thoughts only as long as they are purposely brought forth

in order to test Daiji. Jōshū's answer suggests that when Etchū responds with a natural reaction, Daiji fails to read his mind. The simple and immediate reaction to the situation, whatever that reaction may be, is the "mind of the moment" or "no mind." Therefore Daiji can read Etchū's thoughts only when Etchū is not himself, but his powers do not reach to where Etchū is simply Etchū.

289.

[It is said that in the great sea there dwells a blind turtle. Once in a hundred years the turtle rises to the surface of the sea. The chances that the blind turtle will hit upon a hole in a floating piece of wood are very slim.]

Someone asked, "When the blind turtle encounters the hole in the floating piece of wood—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "It is no mere accident."

NOTE: Jōshū rejects the suggestion of the "blind turtle" parable that enlightenment is a matter of chance. The turtle may be blind, but we are not.

290.

Someone asked, "When living in seclusion in caves and gorges for a long time—how is it then?"

Jōshū said, "Why don't you go away and hide?"

NOTE: Coming to Jōshū to talk about "caves and gorges," the monk is neither here nor there.

291.

A monk asked, "What is the innermost meaning of Buddhism?"

Jōshū said, "Worship!"

The monk stepped forward and was about to say something when Jōshū called out for the young novice Bunon. When Bunon came, Jōshū scolded him: "Where were you just now?"

NOTE: The monk who asks for the "innermost" meaning is certainly not "in" it. When Jōshū says "Worship," the monk still tries to talk. By scolding Bunon, Jōshū suggests that all one has to do is simply to answer the call.

292.

Someone asked, "What is the original essence of the self?" Jōshū said, "I do not use a butcher knife."

NOTE: One doesn't use a cannon to kill a fly. Asking philosophical questions is too coarse and too noisy a way to get hold of what one is after.

293.

A monk asked, "For a long time I aspired to see Jōshū's stone bridge. Now that I am here, all I see is a log bridge."

Jōshū said, "You see only a log bridge. You do not see Jōshū's stone bridge."

The monk said, "What is Jōshū's stone bridge?"

Jōshū said, "Come across! Come across!"

NOTE: In the town where Jōshū lived there was a famous stone bridge. Here it suggests Jōshū himself. In his answers Jōshū implies that if, instead of being taken in by "Jōshū's bridge" (i.e., Jōshū's teaching), the monk had "come across," he might have been able to see what he came for.

294.

Another time a monk asked, "For a long time I aspired to come to Jōshū's stone bridge. Now that I am here, all I see is a log bridge."

Jōshū said, "You only see a log bridge. You do not see Jōshū's stone bridge."

The monk said, "What is Jōshū's stone bridge?"

Jōshū said, "Let the donkey cross! Let the horse cross!"

NOTE: Whoever comes is welcome.

295.

Jōshū went to the lecture hall and said, "The moment there is distinction in terms of affirmation or negation, everything gets confused and the mind is led astray. Is there anything you wish to say?"

A monk stepped forward, hit Jōshū's attendant once, and said, "Why don't you answer the Master?"

Jōshū immediately returned to his room.

Later the attendant asked for Jōshū's opinion: "That monk back there, did he understand?"

Jōshū said, "The one who sits, sees the one who is standing. The one who stands, sees the one who is sitting."

NOTE: Jōshū seems to suggest that he ("the one who sits") and the monk ("the one who stands") see eye to eye with each other.

296.

A monk asked, "The Way—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "What lies beyond the fence."

The monk said, "That is not what I am talking about."

Jōshū said, "Which way were you talking about?"

The monk said, "The Great Way."

Jōshū said, "The Great Way leads to the capital."

297.

Someone asked, "When the dust [of the mind] is wiped off and the Buddha is seen—how is it then?"

Jōshū said, "It is not that the dust doesn't need to be wiped off; you just cannot see Buddha."

NOTE: The monk is taken in by the distinction between the means and the end. Who does he think is the one that is wiping off the dust?

Someone asked, "What is 'the blemish-free body'?"

Jōshū said, "The four great elements and the five aggregates."

NOTE: The four great elements (earth, water, fire, air) and the five aggregates (the physical and mental elements of the person) compose the phenomenal world. In answering thus, Jōshū suggests that "the blemish-free body" is the world as it is.

A monk asked, "What is ignorance?"

Jōshū said, "Why don't you ask about enlightenment?"

The monk said, "What is enlightenment?"

Jōshū said, "It is the very same thing as ignorance."

Once Jōshū bent his fingers into a fist and said, "I call this a fist. What do you call it?"

A monk said, "Master, why do you teach the people by showing them an object?"

Jōshū said, "I am not showing the people any object. If I showed you an object, I would bury you in it."

The monk said, "This is no good."

Jōshū said, "Good-bye."

NOTE: Had Jōshū knocked the monk's teeth out, the monk would have recognized a fist for what it is. It is only because the monk philosophizes that his world is divided into "subject" and "object," "thing" and "no-thing." If he were not overconscious, he would respond to Jōshū's fist not with words but with a fist.

301.

A monk asked, "Where there is a question and an answer, one always falls into the lower realms of gods, devils, and heresy. Even among the wordless there is offense against the law. Well, Master, what is your way?"

Jōshū said, "You do not know how to ask."

The monk said, "Please, Master, answer."

Jōshū said, "If I responded to you, you would taste twenty blows of the stick."

NOTE: How does one solve the dilemma of "neither talking nor keeping silent?" Certainly not by talking about "not talking." This is the worst kind of talk, and it certainly deserves "twenty blows of the stick."

302.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "The moment there is distinction in terms of affirmation or negation, everything gets confused and the mind is led astray. Is there anything you wish to say?"

A monk stepped forward, slapped a young novice once, and left right away. Jōshū immediately returned to his room. On the following day Jōshū asked his attendant, "That monk who was here yesterday, where is he?"

The attendant said, "He went away soon after."

Jōshū said, "Alas! I have been riding a horse for thirty years, and I was beaten by that donkey."

NOTE: "Good" and "bad," "right" and "wrong" are all forgotten — the sound of slapping!

303.

A monk asked, "Those who come to you thus, do you teach them?" Jōshū said, "I do."

The monk said, "Those who do not come to you thus, do you teach them?"

Jōshū said, "I do."

The monk said, "Those who come to you thus, I leave it up to you to teach them. Those who do not come to you thus, how do you teach them?"

Jōshū said, "Stop! Stop! There is no need to explain. My teaching is subtle and hard to understand."

304.

The king of the Chin Province asked, "The Master is aged. How many teeth does he have left?"

Jōshū said, "Only one."

The king said, "If that is so, how can you bite?"

Jōshū said, "There is only one, but I bite one by one."

305.

Someone asked, "When the contrast between the two realms calms down—Master, how do you express that?"

Jōshū said, "It is peaceful this year."

NOTE: "The contrast between the two realms" refers to the nonenlightened mind which shapes the world into contradictory concepts such as "being" and "nonbeing," "suffering" and "deliverance."

306.

A monk asked, "The people have gathered like clouds. What is the subject of today's talk?"

Jōshū said, "Today let us carry some logs and build a hall for the monks."

The monk said, "This is indeed teaching the disciples, isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "I can't play backgammon. I don't know how to gamble."

NOTE: The monk interprets Jōshū's call to work as a Zen sermon.

Jōshū ironically suggests that, having work to do, he has no time for idle word games.

307.

A monk asked, "What is the substance of the enlightened one?"

Jōshū said, "Spring, summer, autumn, winter."

The monk said, "What you are saying is hard for me to understand."

Jōshū said, "You asked me about the substance of the enlightened one."

308.

A monk asked, "What is the innermost meaning of the Buddhist truth?"

Jōshū said, "What is your name?"

The monk gave his name.

Jōshū said, "Inside Gangen Palace, in the garden of Kinkoku."

NOTE: The palace of Gangen was a famous palace in the capital, Chōan. The garden of Kinkoku near the city of Rakuyō was constructed by the renowned gardening master Sekisū. In his answer Jōshū suggests that the monk is like one who, being in a palace, asks what a palace is; being in a garden, asks what a garden is. Doesn't he know?

309.

Someone asked, "Who is the master of the seven Buddhas?"

Jōshū said, "When he feels like sleeping, he sleeps. When he feels like getting up, he gets up."

NOTE: The master of the seven Buddhas (which, according to Buddhist tradition, existed before the historical Buddha) is Monju—the Buddha of Wisdom. In Jōshū's answer "the master of the Buddhas" is simply the enlightened person.

A monk asked, "It is said that 'The Way is not beyond anything; what is beyond anything is not the Way.' The 'beyond anything' Way, what is that?"

Jōshū immediately hit the monk.

The monk said, "Master, don't hit me. Sometime you might be mistaken in hitting someone."

Jōshū said, "To tell a dragon from a snake is easy, but to fool a Zen monk is difficult."

NOTE: Having been told that the Way is "not beyond anything," why does the monk ask for the "beyond anything" Way? In "to fool a Zen monk is difficult" Jōshū suggests that his hitting was no mistake.

Jōshū saw the king entering the monastery, yet he did not get up to greet him. He hit his knee with his hand and said, "Do you understand?"

The king said, "No, I don't."

Jōshū said, "I left my home to become a monk when I was a young man. Now I am an old man. Even though I see the guest, I have no strength to get up."

Someone asked, "Filial devotion—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "Your mother is ugly."

NOTE: Jōshū suggests that the abstract quest for "filial devotion" is worlds apart from the thing itself—sweet ugly mother.

313.

Someone asked, "Filial devotion—what is it?"
Jōshū said, "Have a taste of the iron club."

NOTE: Get it through your body!

314.

A monk asked, "To transcend the Buddha—what is that like?"
Jōshū clapped his hands and roared with laughter.

315.

A monk asked, "It is said that 'One flame lights a hundred thousand flames.' Where does this one flame originate?"
At that Jōshū flung off one of his shoes and said, "An able man would not ask in this way."

NOTE: In "the one flame" the monk refers to "the Buddhist truth."
By flinging off his shoe, Jōshū drives the monk out of the realm of the abstract ("truth"), back to where he originally is.

316.

Someone asked, "Being devoid of all thoughts—what is that like?"
Jōshū said, "Come on, say it! Come on, say it!"

317.

Someone asked, "Being devoid of all distinctions—what is that like?"
Jōshū said, "Say it, quickly! Say it, quickly!"

[A parable in the Lotus Sutra tells of a rich man who, before starting on a long journey, sewed a treasure into the neckband of his poor friend's robe. The friend, not knowing the treasure was there, lived in poverty. Only when he met his benefactor again did he find out that he was, in fact, a rich man.]

A monk asked, "What is the treasure in the robe?"

Jōshū said, "What is it you dislike that you ask such a question?"

The monk said, "It is a question. What is the treasure?"

Jōshū said, "This way you will lose even the robe."

Someone asked, "Does even a dog have Buddha-nature?"

Jōshū said, "From the gates of every house the road leads to the capital."

Someone asked, "The one who has just shown up, who is he?"

Jōshū said, "A Buddha."

A monk asked, "When not even a blade of grass has come out yet—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "You need only smell it and your head will split."

The monk said, "If you do not smell it, what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Like a dead person who is still standing."

The monk said, "Am I not allowed to harmonize with it [i.e., suchness]?"

Jōshū said, "When someone comes, do not address him."

NOTE: In realizing that "the world of forms is the void, the void is the world of forms," you unify reality. Yet this cannot be grasped

philosophically, for if you are overconscious of this "truth," you are still viewing the "void" and "the world of forms" as two separate entities. The void cannot be realized in its purity ("your head will split"), but if you do not see the world of forms in the void, you have not realized what Zen is all about ("like a dead person still standing"). Do not try too hard to "understand" things ("When someone comes, do not address him"). If you take the myriad things as they come—lightly, in a carefree manner—you will see the two as one ("harmonize with it").

322.

Someone asked, "Our founder's intention and the aim of the Buddhist teaching—are they the same or do they differ?"

Jōshū said, "You just left home and you haven't even been initiated, yet you walk around asking people questions."

323.

A monk asked, "What is 'holy'?"

Jōshū said, "Ordinary."

The monk said, "What is 'ordinary'?"

Jōshū said, "Not holy."

The monk said, "When neither ordinary nor holy—what then?"

Jōshū said, "What a fine Zen monk!"

324.

Someone asked, "Two mirrors are facing each other. Which is clearer?"

Jōshū said, "Your sight is blocked by Mount Shumi."

NOTE: In "two mirrors" the monk refers to the enlightened minds of himself and Jōshū. Jōshū suggests that he himself can see enough to discern the monk's blindness.

Someone asked, "I entered the monastery recently. I beg you to teach me."

Jōshū said, "Oh, heavens! Oh, heavens!"

A monk asked, "When the former moment is already gone and the future moment can barely be discerned—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "You cannot name it."

The monk said, "Please, Master, make the distinction."

Jōshū said, "Ask! Ask!"

NOTE: The monk asks about the point of absolute immediacy. Jōshū suggests that the quest after the "now" always misses its aim. If the monk knew how to ask without being conscious of his asking, he would be there.

Someone asked, "When high, steep, and hard to climb—what then?"

Jōshū said, "High peaks are not to my taste."

NOTE: The question implies that enlightenment is a "beyond the world" state, hard to attain. Jōshū suggests that he would rather stay where he is.

Someone asked, "One who has cut off all relations with all the various things—what kind of person is he?"

Jōshū said, "He is no person."

329.

Someone asked, "Please, Master, would you say a word that expresses the gist of the teaching?"

Ājōshū said, "We have no money to give the official today."

NOTE: In "no money to give" Ājōshū could be implying the state of "emptiness." It is more likely, however, that Ājōshū's words are intended simply to suggest the everyday, commonplace situation.

330.

Someone said, "I will not ask anything in particular. So please, Master, do not give any particular answer."

Ājōshū said, "How strange!"

NOTE: "Not anything in particular" suggests "the enlightened state of the void." But words always refer to something. How can one say nothing?

331.

Someone asked, "Without having recourse to the various doctrines, what do you teach the people?"

Ājōshū said, "Since the world came into being, the sun and the moon have never changed places."

332.

Someone asked, "Ordinary consciousness distorts the object. How can one transcend this?"

Ājōshū said, "Leave consciousness alone."

NOTE: The consciousness of consciousness distorts even more.

A monk asked, "One who does not stop in the sphere of purity—what kind of a person is he?"

Jōshū said, "You are still not this kind of a person."

The monk said, "This kind of a person, what is he like?"

Jōshū said, "There, you have stopped."

NOTE: According to the Mahayana Buddhist doctrine, the one who attains the sphere of deliverance should "return to the world" to save others. Jōshū suggests that one who is taken in by the "holy" cannot save even himself.

A monk asked, "What is the source of all things?"

Jōshū said, "Beam, girder, rafter, pole."

The monk said, "I don't understand."

Jōshū said, "The edges are all joined together. Don't you understand?"

Someone asked, "When you do not carry a single thing with you, how is it then?"

Jōshū said, "Put it down!"

Someone asked, "It is said that 'On the road you meet a man who knows the Way. You cannot keep silent, and you should not use words.' How on earth should one deal with that man?"

Jōshū said, "If a man is coming from Chin District, you will not be able to get any news about Kyo District from him."

337.

A monk asked, "The moment I open my mouth, it is already artificial. What is natural?"

Jōshū showed his hand and said, "This is natural."

The monk said, "That is artificial. What is natural?"

Jōshū said, "Natural."

The monk said, "That is artificial."

Jōshū said, "So be it—artificial."

NOTE: For me even the artificial is natural. For you even the natural is artificial.

338.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "I do not like to hear the word *Buddha*."

A monk asked, "Master, do you work for the sake of the people?"

Jōshū said, "Buddha, Buddha."

339.

A monk asked, "Detached from 'now,' what is it [Zen]—directly, to the point?"

Jōshū said, "If you cut out 'now,' you should not ask about it."

The monk said, "What is it—directly, to the point?"

Jōshū said, "I told you, you shouldn't ask."

The monk said, "How can one see it?"

Jōshū said, "The great has no outside; the small has no inside."

NOTE: When it is just it, without even the slightest consciousness of "here" and "now," it clearly has no dimensions at all. How can one point at it?

A monk asked, "Leaving out all words, detached from all arguments—how is it [Zen] then?"

Jōshū said, "I don't know about death."

The monk said, "But that is your state of mind, isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "Indeed it is."

The monk said, "Please, Master, teach me."

Jōshū said, "Leaving out all words, detached from all arguments, what is there to teach?"

Someone asked, "Master, what is your style?"

Jōshū said, "There is not a single thing inside. There is nothing I wish for outside."

Someone asked, "What is the meaning of 'If you return to the source, you will attain the truth'?"

Jōshū said, "If I were to answer you, I would not be worthy of your trust."

NOTE: If Jōshū had said that the one who returns to the source realizes that truth has no "meaning," the listener would have been deluded that Jōshū's words are the "meaning" of truth.

Someone asked, "The mind that applies distinctions—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "If I were to answer you, I would not be worthy of your trust."

344.

A monk asked, "Can one who has renounced the world still be worldly?"

Jōshū said, "A monk—that's what you are. Renouncing or not renouncing—I will have nothing to do with it."

The monk asked, "Why?"

Jōshū said, "That is what being a monk is all about."

345.

A monk asked, "When there is no master and no pupil, how is it then?"

Jōshū said, "Buddha-nature is innate." Then he added, "This is what 'no master, no pupil' means."

346.

Someone asked, "When the world of forms is no longer seen, how is it then?"

Jōshū said, "Why should it be that way?"

347.

A monk asked, "Clear but not pure, mixed but not dirty—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Not pure, not dirty."

The monk said, "What is it like?"

Jōshū said, "Well, I am sorry for you."

The monk said, "To be open in every direction—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "To stay away from 'diamond Zen.' "

NOTE: The monk seems to understand the principle that enlightenment is everyday life. What he does not realize is that as long as he sticks to this "truth," he will miss it. No matter how subtle a conceptual distinction may be, it is always "wrong" insofar as it diverts the mind from things to words. In "diamond Zen" Jōshū seems to suggest the stiffness and inflexibility of the speculative mind.

A monk asked, "The treasure in the sack—what is it?"

Jōshū said, "What is there about it that you dislike?"

The monk said, "When unable to make full use of it—what then?"

Jōshū said, "Is even your own thing too heavy for you?" Then he added, "If you use it, it is heavy. If you do not use it, it is light."

NOTE: By "the treasure in the sack" the monk means Buddha-nature. In his answer Jōshū suggests that the monk is taken in by the distinction between "appearance" ("the sack") and "essence" ("the treasure"). It is only when you are conscious of it ("use it") that Buddha-nature becomes a problem.

A monk asked, "What is Daruma's mind—directly, to the point?"
Jōshū spat.

The monk said, "This very thing [you have just done]—what is it?"
Jōshū spat on the floor again.

Someone asked, "The Way of the monk—what is it?"
Jōshū said, "Being detached from 'the Way.' "

Someone asked, "Master, could you please teach me the state of true tranquility?"

Jōshū's answer: "If I teach you, it won't be tranquil anymore."

352.

Someone asked, "When there is no question—what is that like?" Jōshū said, "It is not in accordance with ordinary talk."

NOTE: The question implies that Buddha-nature is beyond words, whereas Jōshū suggests that it is in ordinary talk.

353.

Someone asked, "When 'the mountains from all four quarters' close in on you—what then?"

Jōshū said, "There is no way to escape."

354.

A monk asked, "When one reaches the point where one cannot say it anymore—what then?"

Jōshū said, "One cannot say it."

The monk said, "What should one say then?"

Jōshū said, "That is when one cannot say it."

355.

A monk asked, "Where is it that 'all words fail to reach'?"

Jōshū called for the young novice Bunon. Bunon answered.

Jōshū said, "What time is it now?"

356.

Someone asked, "Who is the master of Birushana Buddha?"

Jōshū said, "Watch your mouth!"

A monk asked, "It is said that 'To reach the Way is not difficult; the only setback is that of choice.' How can one do without choice?"

Jōshū said, "In heaven and on earth, I alone am noble."

The monk said, "This statement is still a matter of choice."

Jōshū said, "You yokel, where does the choice lie?"

NOTE: "Choice" (reasoning in terms of affirmation and negation) is the main hindrance to enlightenment. Yet if one "fills the universe," what is there to choose?

Someone asked, "Who transcends the three realms [of existence]?"

Jōshū said, "Hold on! I am within them."

NOTE: According to the Buddhist doctrine, the ordinary world of men is divided into three realms (sangai): (1) the realm of desire, (2) the realm of forms, and (3) the realm of the formless. In his answer Jōshū suggests that enlightenment is not anything beyond the ordinary world.

Someone asked, "The person who knows being and nothingness—what is he like?"

Jōshū said, "I'd like to hear your next question. Go ahead, ask!"

Someone asked, "Who is the master of Birushana Buddha?"

Jōshū said, "You are the pupil."

A monk asked, "Having returned to the source and attained the truth—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "What terrible haste!"

The monk said, "How do you do?"

Jōshū said, "Where does 'How do you do' originate?"

NOTE: The monk seems to be searching after enlightenment through some abstract "truth." To Jōshū's suggestions that he is exerting too much effort in his Zen ("terrible haste"), the monk responds with the natural everyday language of "How do you do?" But Jōshū points out that this, too, is no more than a Zen show.

A monk asked, "When the sharp sword is drawn from its case—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "Black."

The monk said, "When there is a proper question, do you not distinguish the white?"

Jōshū said, "I have no time to fritter away like this."

The monk said, "But here I am with my hands crossed right in front of you. So?"

Jōshū said, "I didn't see you cross your hands."

The monk said, "When the hands are not crossed—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Who is it whose hands are not crossed?"

NOTE: The monk is asking Jōshū to recognize his enlightened "working"; however, Jōshū refuses to see any "white" in him. On top of that, Jōshū causes him to admit that he is taken in by the distinction between "enlightenment" ('hands crossed' in the Zen monk's posture) and "nonenlightenment" ('hands not crossed'), which is in itself the most obvious sign of the "ignorant" mind.

Someone asked, "Whence does the practitioner of the Way receive grace?"

Jōshū said, "Where do you not receive grace from?"

A monk asked, "Master, what is it that you are teaching me?"

Jōshū said, "There is no pupil before me."

The monk said, "If that is so, you are not working for the sake of the people, are you?"

Jōshū immediately said, "Good-bye."

NOTE: The monk seems to be taken in by the concept of "the teaching." Jōshū suggests that the monk look for himself where he is "no pupil." The monk, who misses the point, claims that if he is no pupil, Jōshū is, likewise, no teacher. Jōshū sends the monk to torture others in his quest for "the teaching."

A monk asked, "Our founder's intention and the aim of the Buddhist teaching—are they the same or do they differ?"

Jōshū made his hand into a fist and placed it on his head.

The monk said, "Master, you are still like this, aren't you?"

Jōshū took his cap off and said, "What is it that you say I am like?"

NOTE: In putting his fist on his head, Jōshū seems to respond to the monk's nonsensical question with a nonsense of his own. However, when the monk suggests that Jōshū's act smells of a Zen show, Jōshū takes off his cap, thus proving that his Zen show can, at least, be turned "practical."

366.

A monk asked, "When the mind does not dwell upon anything—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "It is living. It is not being taken in by distinctions."

The monk asked, "How can one manage not to be taken in by distinctions?"

Jōshū immediately bowed his head.

NOTE: The monk's mind is dwelling upon not dwelling upon anything. It is thus far from the "nothing" he is after. Jōshū's bowing his head, on the other hand, is just what it is.

367.

A monk asked, "Where does the Way arise?"

Jōshū said, "That [your thought] arises. The Way does not arise; nor is it extinguished."

The monk said, "It is 'the world as it is,' isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "That is 'the world as it is.' The Way is not like that."

NOTE: Whether the monk's words are "wrong" (as in "Where does the Way arise?") or "right" (as in "It is 'the world as it is'"), they refer to nothing but "that" which goes on in his mind. Thus, what is "true" about his words is not what he says, but that he says what he says.

368.

Someone asked, "The founder's intention and the aim of the Buddhist teaching—are they the same or do they differ?"

Jōshū said, "If you understand our founder's intention, you understand the Buddhist teaching."

Someone asked, "When the bright full moon shines in the sky—what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "My ears are plugged up."

NOTE: When it comes to the "moon shining in the sky" kind of "enlightenment," Jōshū plugs his ears.

A monk asked, "When there is only a shade of difference—how is it then?"

Jōshū said, "Coarse."

The monk said, "When one responds to the situation—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Distortion."

NOTE: As long as the mind is still making distinctions, it cannot be said to have reached the "evenness" of enlightenment. It is only in the nonspeculative, immediate response to the situation that one attains the distinction-free state of mind. However, this last statement on "immediacy" is, in itself, not immediate. Thus, the moment "the truth of immediacy" is spoken, it is already "distorted."

A monk asked, "What is the practice of a monk?"

Jōshū stretched out one hand and straightened his robe.

Someone asked, "Where is the living link with Buddha?"

Jōshū said, "No one else knows."

NOTE: No one, that is, other than you.

373.

Someone asked, "What should we call the provisional teachings?" Jōshū said, "Call them provisional teachings."

NOTE: The provisional teachings (*hōben*) are considered temporary means to lead sentient beings toward the final doctrine. The monk who asks the question apparently expects Jōshū to reject the provisional teachings and claim that one should get "right to the core of the matter." In his simple response Jōshū proves that he is not taken in even by this distinction.

374.

Someone asked, "I have just entered the monastery, and I understand nothing. Please, Master, teach me."

Jōshū said, "Before entering the monastery, you understood even less."

375.

A monk asked, "What did the sages of old teach?"

Jōshū said, "If not for your question, I would not know that there were sages of old."

The monk said, "Please, Master, teach me."

Jōshū said, "I am no sage of old."

376.

Someone asked, "What is Buddha?"

Jōshū said, "What are you?"

377.

Someone asked, "Going straight on the path—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "Going straight on the path."

Someone asked, "If a poor person comes, what will you give him?" Jōshū said, "There is nothing lacking."

An old woman asked, "I am an ignorant and sinful creature. How can I be delivered [from the world of suffering]?"

Jōshū said, "May all human beings be reborn in heaven; may this old woman descend into hell forever."

NOTE: Once there, she won't be troubled anymore about going there.

A monk asked, "When the bright full moon shines in the middle of the sky—what is that like?"

Jōshū said, "You are still downstairs."

The monk said, "Please, Master, carry me upstairs."

Jōshū said, "When you have dropped the moon, come and see me."

NOTE: As long as the monk imagines enlightenment to be "higher," he will be stuck "lower" than where he actually is.

Jōshū once preached to the people. He said: "When I first went to see Master Yakuzan, I acquired one word. Since then, until this very day, my stomach has been full."

NOTE: Although Jōshū (778–897) seems to have met with Yakuzan (751–834), it is generally assumed that he attained enlightenment under his own master, Nansen. It is not clear what the "one word" of Yakuzan was, nor does it matter.

382.

Jōshū was in his room doing Zazen [Zen meditation] when the head monk informed him, "The king has come for worship."

When the king had ended his worship, his attendant said to Jōshū, "The ruler of the country is here. Why don't you rise?"

Jōshū said, "You may not know it, but in my place, when a man of low rank comes, I go to meet him at the gate; when a man of middle rank comes, I get off the Zen seat to meet him; but when a man of high rank comes, I receive him seated. I couldn't possibly treat a king as though he were of low or middle rank. Heaven forbid that I should look down upon the great king."

The king was pleased with Jōshū's response. He invited Jōshū to the palace often and held him in great esteem.

383.

Jōshū asked Shūingai [a former disciple of Master Rinzai], "Do you still dream of Rinzai?"

Shūingai raised his fist.

Jōshū said, "Where do you see it [Zen]?"

Shūingai said, "I see it here."

Jōshū said, "Where do you see Rinzai?"

Shūingai was speechless.

Jōshū asked, "Where does Shūingai come from?"

Shūingai said, "There is no coming; there is no going."

Jōshū said, "Although he is no crow, he comes flying, he goes flying."

NOTE: In Chinese the phrase "no coming, no going" has the same pronunciation as "comes flying, goes flying." Through this pun Jōshū ironically criticizes Shūingai, whose understanding of Zen is only conceptual.

384.

Jōshū preached to the people. He said: "The moment there is distinction in terms of affirmation or negation, everything gets con-

fused and the mind is led astray. Is there anything you wish to say?"

Later a monk told this to Master Rakuho. Rakuho made his teeth chatter. The monk told Master Ungo of this.

Ungo said, "Why was it necessary to do that?" Then the monk told Jōshū everything.

Jōshū said, "No doubt there are men in the south who have lost their body and soul."

The monk said, "Please, Master, say it [Zen]."

The moment Jōshū was about to say something, the monk pointed at another monk who was standing nearby and said, "This monk has already eaten his rice. What need is there for words?"

Jōshū kept silent.

NOTE: Although Jōshū's saying is "words," they are words right to the point. Rakuho suggests that Jōshū spoke too much, whereas Ungo suggests that Rakuho's suggestion was superfluous. Jōshū indicates that these two masters of the south are taken in by their "Zen games." The same is true of the monk's "he has eaten his rice": It is no more than a Zen show.

385.

Jōshū was reading the Diamond Sutra when a monk asked, "It is said that all the various Buddhas, all the wisdom of the Buddhas, everything derives from this sutra. What is this sutra?"

Jōshū said, "Kongōhanyaharamitakyō. I have heard that Buddha was once in the country of Shaei. . . ."

The monk said, "That's not it."

Jōshū said, "I cannot possibly revise the sutra of my own accord."

NOTE: In simply reading the first sentence of the Diamond Sutra, Jōshū suggests that the sutra is what it says.

386.

A monk was taking leave of Jōshū. Jōshū said, "Now that you are going elsewhere, if a man asks you, 'Have you seen Jōshū?,' how will you answer?"

The monk said, " 'I have seen him' is all that I can say."
Jōshū said, "I am a donkey. How do you see me?"
The monk was speechless.

NOTE: The monk only saw the Jōshū that is Jōshū, and not the Jōshū that is not Jōshū.

387.

Jōshū asked a newly arrived monk, "Where have you come from?"
The monk said, "I have come from the south."
Jōshū said, "Have you heard about Jōshū's barrier?"
The monk said, "You should know that there are those who do not pass through the barrier."
Jōshū scolded him, "You damned salt smuggler!" He also said, "Brethren! Jōshū's barrier is difficult to pass through."
The monk asked, "What is Jōshū's barrier?"
Jōshū said, "The stone bridge is what it is."

NOTE: Jōshū is named after the Prefecture (shū) of Jō, where he settled down as a resident monk. In "Have you heard about Jōshū's barrier?" Jōshū is asking about the barrier of Jō Prefecture but referring at the same time to his own "barrier." He thus demands that the monk "identify" himself. In "there are those who do not pass through the barrier," the monk suggests that one does not necessarily have to go through Jōshū's place. Jōshū scolds the monk for being evasive ("salt smuggler") and suggests that he go straight in without speculating so much. On "Jōshū's stone bridge" see also koans 293-294.

388.

A monk came from the place of Master Seppō [in the south].
Jōshū said, "You should not stop here. My place is just to take refuge in. Buddhism is all in the south."
The monk said, "Why should there be 'south' or 'north' in Buddhism?"
Jōshū said, "Even if you have come from Ungo or Seppō's place, you are still no more than 'a man of one-sided views.' "

The monk said, "What is there on the other side?"

Jōshū said, "Why did you wet your bed last night?"

The monk said, "When one has attained enlightenment, what is it like?"

Jōshū said, "Now it is shitting."

NOTE: In "Buddhism is all in the south," Jōshū ironically criticizes the intellectual style of the Zen masters of southern China where the monk came from. When the monk asks for Jōshū's style, Jōshū suggests that the monk's way of pursuing Zen is no more than "bed wetting." In his following question on the essence of enlightenment the monk goes from bad to worse, which seems to justify Jōshū's opinion of him.

389.

Jōshū asked a newly arrived monk, "Where have you come from?"
The monk said, "I have come from Master Seppō."

Jōshū said, "What words does Seppō use in teaching the people?"

The monk said, "The master always says, 'The whole universe is one eye of the monk. Where do you people shit?'"

Jōshū said, "If you go back, take this hoe for him."

NOTE: Seppō's powerful saying suggests that in this world of Buddha nothing is excluded. In sending a hoe to Seppō to clean up the shit, Jōshū seems to imply that he approves of Seppō's Zen.

390

When Jōshū made an offering of his robes and distributed them among the people, a monk asked, "Master, if you give everything away, what will you use?"

Jōshū said, "Koshūshi!"

The monk said, "Yes."

Jōshū said, "What do you use?"

NOTE: What did you wear before your mother was born?"

134

Jōshū lectured to the people. He said: "It [the essence of the world] was before the world came into existence. When the world perishes, it will not be destroyed."

A monk asked, "What is it?"

Jōshū said, "The four elements and the five aggregates."

The monk said, "These are still destructible. What is it?"

Jōshū said, "The five aggregates and the four elements."

NOTE: In ordinary thinking "space" or "void" is understood as an abstract concept and is distinguished from "matter" or "things." Jōshū argues, however, that "matter is void, void is matter."

A Buddhist scholar monk from Jō Prefecture arrived at Jōshū's place. Jōshū asked, "What are you studying?"

The scholar said, "Whether discussing the teaching, the commandments, or the philosophy, I can immediately bring forth an argument without consulting with anyone."

Jōshū raised his hand and showed it to the monk: "Can you argue this?"

The scholar was dumbfounded.

Jōshū said, "Even if you can immediately bring forth an argument without consulting with anyone, you are merely a fellow lecturing on doctrine and philosophy. This is not the Buddhist truth, however."

The monk said, "What the master has just said is the Buddhist truth, then, isn't it?"

Jōshū said, "Even if you can ask questions and even if you can answer them, it is still within the doctrine and the philosophy. This is not the Buddhist truth."

The scholar was speechless.

Jōshū asked a pilgrim, "Where have you come from?" The pilgrim said, "I have come from the temple in the north." Jōshū said, "How is that temple, compared with this one?" The pilgrim did not answer. Jōshū ordered a monk standing nearby to answer instead of the pilgrim. The monk took the pilgrim's place and said, "I have come from that temple." At that point Jōshū laughed. He then ordered Bunon to answer. Bunon said, "Well, the pilgrim will have nothing to do with your words."

NOTE: In asking for the difference between the two temples Jōshū lays a trap. All those present refuse to be taken in by comparisons, and thus they avoid the trap. As Jōshū's "failure" only proves the quality of his disciples, he does not seem dissatisfied with the results.

Jōshū asked a scholar monk, "What are you studying now?" The scholar said, "I am reading the Yuima Sutra." Jōshū said, "The Yuima Sutra says, 'Step by step is the site of the Way.' You, where are you?" The scholar had no answer. Jōshū ordered Zeneki to answer instead of the scholar. Zeneki said, "One can perceive the site of the Way in this one question, can't one?" Jōshū said, "Your body is in the site of the Way, but your mind, where is it? Say it quickly!" Zeneki said, "Master, you are searching for my mind, aren't you?" Jōshū said, "That's right." Zeneki said, "This question and answer—just what do you think they are?" Jōshū said, "I am not where the mind is. It is in transcending the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind that reality can be perceived." Zeneki said, "If it is not in the mind, why is it, Master, that you are looking for it there?"

Jōshū said, "It is because you cannot say it."

Zeneki said, "Even if you go beyond the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, reality cannot be grasped. Why is it that I cannot say it?"

Jōshū said, "Because you eat what I spit."

NOTE: In "One can perceive the site of the Way in this one question" Zeneki implies that "the site of the Way" (i.e., the Zen mind) is "the mind of the moment." In "Your body is in the site of the Way, but your mind, where is it?" Jōshū suggests that even though Zeneki's mouth may utter the "proper" words, the properness of his mind is still in question. Zeneki again claims that his mind is right there, engaged in talking to Jōshū. Jōshū lays a trap for Zeneki and states that Zen is not at all in the "mind" but beyond it. Zeneki is too ready to accept Jōshū's "view." Jōshū concludes the argument by suggesting that Zeneki had better stop borrowing from others.

395.

Jōshū asked a monk, "Have you read the Lotus Sutra?"

The monk said, "I have."

Jōshū said, "In this sutra it says, 'They wear a monk's robe, live in a secluded place, and call it the place of practice. Thus they deceive the people.' What do you understand this to mean?"

The monk was about to bow when Jōshū said, "Have you come here wearing a monk's robe?"

The monk said, "I have."

Jōshū said, "Don't deceive me."

The monk said, "How can I avoid deceiving you?"

Jōshū said, "Live your own way. Don't accept my word."

396.

Jōshū asked a scholar monk, "What are you studying now?"

The scholar said, "I lecture on the Yuima Sutra."

Jōshū said, "Who is Yuima's grandfather?"

The scholar said, "It is I."

Jōshū said, "Why should you lecture for your grandchild?"

The scholar had no answer.

NOTE: Yuima is one of the central figures mentioned in the Yuima Sutra. In "Who is Yuima's grandfather?" Jōshū suggests the essence of things—the void—in which Yuima, the scholar, Jōshū, and everything else are one and the same. In "It is I" the scholar answers Jōshū's challenge in a somewhat oversophisticated manner. Through the reversal of the scholar's answer from its "Zen meaning" into common sense, Jōshū proves to the scholar that he may not be as smart as he imagines himself to be.

397.

One day when Jōshū went up to the preaching stand, a monk stepped forward and bowed [intending to ask a question]. Jōshū brought his hands together and said, "Good-bye" [thus ending his lecture].

398.

Another day a monk bowed.
Jōshū said, "Ask well, ask well."
The monk asked, "What is Zen?"
Jōshū said, "Today it is cloudy, so I will not answer."

NOTE: In "Today it is cloudy" Jōshū is responsive to the moment. In the combination of "Today it is cloudy" and "so I will not answer" there is "nonsense" to parallel the nonsense of the monk's question.

399.

Jōshū asked a newly arrived monk, "What direction have you come from?"
The monk said, "I have come from no direction."
Jōshū immediately turned his back on the monk. The monk took his cushion and following Jōshū, changed his position.
Jōshū said, "That's some 'no direction.' "

NOTE: The monk assumes that as everything is void, there are no

particular directions. In making the monk change his position, Jōshū proves to him that the void, being everything, holds every direction.

400.

Jōshū asked a newly arrived monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "I have come from the south."

Jōshū said, "You've come three thousand miles to meet someone. Don't play the fool."

The monk said, "I'm not doing anything of the kind."

Jōshū said, "Catch the willow flowers, catch the willow flowers."

NOTE: The monk may indeed have come from the south, but that is not where he comes from. If he realized that "everything is void," he would understand that when it comes to "where one comes from," one direction is as good as another. Then, like a child running after butterflies, he would know no south and no north.

401.

When Master Bukan arrived at Mount Gotai, he saw an old man. Bukan said, "You are Monju [the Buddha of Wisdom], aren't you?"

The old man said, "How can there be two Monjus?"

Bukan immediately bowed. The old man disappeared.

A monk told the above story to Jōshū.

Jōshū said, "Bukan had only one eye."

Then Jōshū ordered Bunon to take the place of the old man, while he himself played Bukan.

Jōshū said, "It is Monju, isn't it?"

Bunon said, "How can there be two Monjus?"

Jōshū said, "Monju, Monju."

NOTE: In "How can there be two Monjus?" the old man suggests that Bukan should recognize Monju in himself instead of looking for him outside. In "Bukan had only one eye" Jōshū seems to suggest that the Bukan-old man dialogue is somewhat stiff and one-sided. Jōshū's response, "Monju, Monju," suggests "I am Monju. You are Monju. Why deny anyone anything?"

Jōshū asked two newly arrived monks, "Have you been here before?"

One monk said, "No, I haven't."

Jōshū said, "Go and have some tea."

Then he asked the other one, "Have you been here before?"

The monk said, "I have."

Jōshū said, "Go and have some tea."

The head monk asked, "Master, you told the monk who has never been here before to go have some tea. I will say nothing of this. But why did you tell the monk who has been here before to go have some tea?"

Jōshū said, "Head monk!"

The head monk answered the call.

Jōshū said, "Go have some tea."

Jōshū arrived at Master Ungo's place.

Ungo said, "You are rather old. Why don't you look for some place to settle down?"

Jōshū said, "Where could I live?"

Ungo said, "Before us are the ruins of an old temple."

Jōshū said, "If that is so, why don't you go and live there yourself?"

NOTE: Everything being void, where can one live?

Jōshū arrived at Master Shuyu's place.

Shuyu said, "You are old. Why don't you look for some place to settle down?"

Jōshū said, "Where could I live?"

Shuyu said, "Such an old fellow, and he still doesn't know where to live."

Jōshū said, "I have been riding a horse for thirty years, and today I was beaten by a donkey."

NOTE: The void being each and every thing, how can one not live somewhere?

405.

Another time Jōshū went to Shuyu's room and was looking every which way.

Shuyu said, "If you stumble on level ground, what will become of you?"

Jōshū said, "It is only because the heart runs wild."

NOTE: As much as one might say, "All is one, all is the same," sometimes one cannot help being taken in by what one sees.

406.

One day Jōshū took his stick, entered Master Shuyu's lecture hall, and walked to and fro, from the east to the west.

Shuyu said, "What are you doing?"

Jōshū said, "I am looking for water."

Shuyu said, "There is not a single drop in my place. So what is the use of looking?"

Jōshū placed his stick against the wall and left at once.

NOTE: In "I am looking for water," Jōshū suggests that he is measuring the extent (or depth) of Shuyu's understanding. In "There is not a single drop in my place," Shuyu implies that he is beyond such measurements. Jōshū then gives up the "search."

407.

On the road to Mount Tai there was an old woman who used to pose questions to the monks.

A monk asked, "Which is the way to Mount Tai?"

The old woman said, "Go straight ahead."

The monk had just taken a few steps when the old woman said, "This one, too, goes like this."

When Jōshū heard of this, he went there right away and asked, "Which is the road to Mount Tai?"

The old woman said, "Go straight ahead."

Jōshū had just taken a few steps when the old woman said, "This one, too, goes like this."

Jōshū immediately returned, reported it to the people, and said, "That old woman, today I have seen through her."

NOTE: The old woman's "Go straight ahead" and her "This one, too, goes like this" sound very suggestive. People who are seeking significance attach all kinds of meanings to meaningless situations. Whereas the monk is taken in by the "meaning" of the old woman's words, Jōshū sees a wrinkle-faced old woman who says what she says: that is all there is to it.

408.

Jōshū saw a monk approaching. He took an ember from the fire, showed it to the monk, and said, "Do you understand?"

The monk said, "No, I don't."

Jōshū said, "Do not call it 'fire.' That I have said already."

Jōshū lifted the ember again and said, "Do you understand?"

The monk said, "No, I don't."

Jōshū said, "If you go from here to Jō District, the place of Master Tōsu is there. You go there, bow to him, and ask your question. If you have realized it, there is no need to come back here. If you have not realized it, come back."

The monk left immediately. As soon as he arrived at Tōsu's place, Tōsu asked, "Where are you coming from?"

The monk said, "I have come from Jōshū for the express purpose of paying homage to you."

Tōsu said, "Old man Jōshū, what does he say?"

At that time the monk told the previous story in detail. Tōsu got off his Zen seat, walked three or four steps, sat down again, and said, "Do you understand?"

The monk said, "No, I don't."

Tōsu said, "Go back and tell Jōshū."

The monk returned and told the preceding to Jōshū. Jōshū said, "Well, do you understand?"
The monk said, "I still don't."
Jōshū said, "There is not much difference."

409.

Master Fuke was eating raw vegetables. Master Rinzai saw him and said, "Fuke is just like a donkey."
At that Fuke brayed.
Rinzai said no more.
Fuke said, "Rinzai is a greenhorn. He has only one eye."
Jōshū said instead, "Just let him have his portion of fodder."

NOTE: Rinzai sees Fuke as a donkey. Fuke does not mind being a donkey, but he criticizes Rinzai for not playing the "donkey, no donkey" game thoroughly enough. Jōshū suggests that since Fuke is a donkey, one should treat him as a donkey instead of arguing with him.

410.

Master Hoju asked the tinker Ko, "You are Ko the tinker, are you not?"
Ko said, "That's right."
Hoju said, "Can you mend the void?"
Ko said, "Please break the void."
Upon that Hoju hit Ko and said, "Someday a talkative monk will explain it for you."
Later Ko the tinker told this to Jōshū. Jōshū said, "Why did he hit you?"
Ko said, "I don't know what I did wrong."
Jōshū said, "You don't even know how to deal with this one crack, and yet you want him to break the void."
At that Ko understood. Jōshū added, "In any case, mend this one crack."

NOTE: The tinker sees the void only where there is no thing. In hitting the tinker Hoju "breaks the void." In understanding the hit, the tinker "mends the crack."

Jōshū was walking with an official in the orchard when they saw a rabbit run past.

The official said, "The Master is a man of virtue. Why should a rabbit that sees you run away?"

Jōshū said, "Because I like to kill."

NOTE: The rabbit is not taken in by "virtue."

Jōshū saw a monk sweeping the ground and asked, "If you sweep thus, will it get clean?"

The monk said, "The more you sweep, the more there is to sweep."

Jōshū said, "But there is the one [Buddha-nature] that sweeps the dust, isn't there?"

The monk said, "Who is it that sweeps the dust?"

Jōshū said, "Do you understand?"

The monk said, "I don't."

Jōshū said, "Go ask Master Ungo."

The monk went and asked Ungo, "The one that sweeps the dust— who is he?"

Ungo said, "You blind fool!"

NOTE: "Sweeping the dust" refers to clearing the mind of attachment and ignorance in order to attain enlightenment. Both Jōshū and Ungo suggest that the monk is somewhat overconscious in his pursuit of enlightenment.

Jōshū asked a monk, "How long have you been here?"

The monk said, "Seven or eight years."

Jōshū said, "Have you seen me?"

The monk said, "I have."

Jōshū said, "I am a donkey. How do you see me?"

The monk said, "Entering the realm of truth, I see you."
Jōshū said, "I thought that you could see right to the point, but you are just a good-for-nothing rice-eater."
The monk said, "Please, Master, teach me."
Jōshū said, "Why don't you say 'I see you in the manger'?"

NOTE: The "truth" of the monk may be in the "realm of truth," but the truth of the donkey is in its fodder.

414.

A layman pilgrim who came to the monastery was burning incense. Jōshū asked a monk, "That one there is burning incense and worshipping. I am here talking with you. In such a situation, on which side is there life?"

The monk said, "Master, what do you think?"
Jōshū said, "If that is what you say, it is there."
The monk said, "Well, then, he has the lead."
Jōshū laughed.

NOTE: Life is where there is no thought on "life."

415.

Jōshū and the young novice Bunon played at debating. The goal was not to have the upper hand, and it was agreed that the winner should buy a rice cake.

Jōshū said, "I am a donkey."
Bunon said, "I am the donkey's ass."
Jōshū said, "I am the donkey's dung."
Bunon said, "I am the worm in the dung."
Jōshū said, "What's the good of being there?"
Bunon said, "I spend the summer there."
Jōshū said, "Go buy a rice cake!"

NOTE: In chapter 22 of the writings of the Chinese philosopher Chuang-tzu (286?–369? B.C.), translated by Burton Watson, we find the following dialogue:

Master Tung-kuo asked Chuang-tzu, "This thing called the Way—where does it exist?"

Chuang-tzu said, "There is no place it doesn't exist."

"Come," said Master Tung-kuo, "you must be more specific!"

"It is in the ant."

"As low a thing as that?"

"It is in the panic grass."

"But that is lower still."

"It is in the tiles and shards."

"How can it be so low?"

"It is in the piss and shit!"

Master Tung-kuo made no reply.

Chuang-tzu said, "Sir, your questions simply don't get at the substance of the matter. When inspector Huo asked the superintendent of the market how to test the fatness of a pig by pressing it with the foot, he was told that the lower down on the pig you press, the nearer you come to the truth."

Jōshū and Bunon are playing the same game. Where Bunon forgets that worms have no summer vacation, Bunon-the-monk overcomes Bunon-the-worm. Bunon ends up "higher" than Jōshū. In thus "winning" he loses and has to buy the rice cake.

416.

Jōshū was on his way back from the king's palace when he noticed that a piece of a tombstone was missing.

A monk asked, "This piece of tombstone, did it rise into the sky? Did it sink into the earth?"

Jōshū said, "It neither rose into the sky, nor sank into the earth."

The monk said, "Where did it go, then?"

Jōshū said, "It fell down."

417.

Jōshū was sitting when a monk stepped forward and bowed. Jōshū said, "Good-bye."

The monk was about to ask something, and Jōshū said, "Again?"

A monk was taking his leave. Jōshū said, "Where are you going?" The monk said, "To the state of Min."

Jōshū said, "In Min there is a hell of a war going on. You will have to avoid it."

The monk said, "How can I avoid it?"

Jōshū said, "That's it."

A monk came to Jōshū for an interview. When he saw Jōshū sitting there with his robe pulled over his head, the monk immediately turned to leave.

Jōshū said, "Don't say I didn't receive you."

NOTE: A sleeping cat is no less a cat.

Jōshū asked a monk, "Where have you come from?"

The monk said, "I have come from the south."

Jōshū said, "Whom did you join up with?"

The monk said, "A buffalo."

Jōshū said, "Why should a fine monk join up with a beast?"

The monk said, "There is no difference."

Jōshū said, "Indeed? What a fine beast!"

The monk said, "I cannot agree."

Jōshū said, "Whether you agree or not is up to you. Give me back that companion of yours."

NOTE: In "Whom did you join up with?" Jōshū is asking about the monk's enlightenment. To show off his "enlightened" indifference to enlightenment, the monk identifies himself with a buffalo, thus suggesting that, as far as he is concerned, all things are equal. Jōshū, who sees through the monk's Zen show, suggests that he leave the buffalo alone. After all, what did the buffalo do that it should fall into the same state as a learned monk?

Jōshū asked a monk, "Is Daruma in the temple?"

The monk said, "He is."

Jōshū said, "Then go and call him. Let him wash my feet."

In a temple there were two monks who kept declining the post of head monk, each in favor of the other. The monk in charge of discipline told Jōshū. Jōshū said, "Let's make both of them minor monks."

The monk in charge of discipline said, "Then whom shall we make the head monk?"

Jōshū said, "Prepare the incense."

The monk said, "The incense is ready."

Jōshū said [as if starting the ceremony], "Precepts incense! Meditation incense!"

NOTE: In preparing the incense and "starting" the promotion ceremony, Jōshū suggests that when it is time to appoint a head monk, a head monk is appointed. The two monks are implicitly criticized for being self-conscious. They should have simply accepted the post when it was offered to them.

Attending the burial service of a monk, Jōshū said, "There is just one dead man and so many people sending him off." Then he added, "So many dead people sending off one living man."

At that a monk asked, "It is the mind that is alive? It is the body that is alive?"

Jōshū said, "Body or mind, neither one is alive."

The monk said, "What does that mean?"

Jōshū said, "A dead man."

NOTE: In chapter 18 of the writings of Chuang-tzu we find the following tale:

Lieh-tzu was on a trip and was eating by the roadside when he saw a hundred-year-old skull. He pulled away the weeds, pointed his finger, and said, "Only you and I know that nothing dies and nothing lives. Are you unhappy? Am I happy?"

Not unlike Lieh-tzu, Jōshū refuses to make distinctions between life and death. However, the monk who does distinguish between "body" and "mind" is no doubt "dead."

424.

A monk saw a cat and asked, "I call it a cat. Master, what do you call it?"

Jōshū said, "You calling it a cat."

425.

When the king of Chin District came to see Jōshū, the king's attendant went ahead to inform Jōshū. He said, "The great king has arrived."

Jōshū said, "Welcome, great king!"

The attendant said, "Not yet! He has just arrived at the outer gate."

Jōshū said, "Again you say he has arrived?"

NOTE: The great king is here always.

426.

Jōshū went to the toilet. From there he called the monk Bunon. When Bunon answered the call, Jōshū said, "Don't expect me to talk Buddhism with you in the toilet."

NOTE: There's nothing wrong with the toilet; the problem is with talking Buddhism.

When Jōshū was walking through the palace, he called out to the attendant. The attendant answered the call.

Jōshū said, "What a splendid palace!"

The attendant was speechless.

Jōshū arrived at Master Rinzai's place. He was starting to wash his feet when Rinzai asked, "What is the meaning of 'Our founder came from the west'?"

Jōshū said, "I am just washing my feet."

Rinzai came near and listened attentively.

Jōshū said, "If you have understood, so much the better. If you haven't understood, don't say a word. What would be the use?"

With a swing of his sleeves Rinzai left.

Jōshū said, "For thirty years I have been on a pilgrimage, and today, because of that man, I made the mistake of explaining."

When Jōshū went to Kokusei Temple on Mount Tendai, he met with Master Kanzan and Master Jittoku. Jōshū said, "For a long time I aspired to meet Kanzan and Jittoku. Now that I am here, all I see are two bulls."

At once Kanzan and Jittoku took the posture of fighting bulls.

Jōshū said, "Shoo! Shoo!"

The two gnashed their teeth and glared at each other.

Jōshū immediately returned to the meditation hall.

The two came into the meditation hall and asked Jōshū, "That situation a while ago—what was it?"

Jōshū laughed aloud.

NOTE: Kanzan was a monk-poet who lived on Mount Tendai. He would frequently visit Kokusei Temple with his friend Jittoku to collect the monks' leftovers. Although these two may have performed the "bull show" to express their carefree movement in the

realms of men and beasts, it is unthinkable that they should ask Jōshū for explanation.

430.

One day Kanzan and Jittoku asked Jōshū, "Where have you been?" Jōshū said, "I went to pay homage to the five hundred holy ones." Kanzan and Jittoku said, "Five hundred cows, aren't they, these holy ones?"

Jōshū said, "What turned them into five hundred cows?"

Kanzan said, "Alas! Alas!"

Jōshū laughed aloud.

NOTE: By the "five hundred holy ones" Jōshū apparently means the five hundred holy persons (*rakan* or *arakan*, the disciples of Buddha) who, according to tradition, lived on Mount Tendai. Kanzan's "Alas! Alas!" sounds like an exclamation of sorrow for the "holy ones" who have turned into cows. However, as Jōshū's laughter suggests, if one is not taken in by the otherworldly concept of "holiness," why should a cow be less holy than a Buddhist monk?

431.

When the young novice Dōan came to Jōshū for an interview, Jōshū told his attendant, "Send him away!"

The attendant turned to Dōan and said, "The Master says you should leave."

Dōan at once said good-bye.

Jōshū said, "Dōan can enter the gate. The attendant stays outside."

NOTE: Jōshū "confuses" them so as to drive away consciousness of "in" and "out," "failure" and "success," "enlightenment" and "ignorance."

432.

When Jōshū was a pilgrim, he arrived at a temple. As soon as he

entered the gate and met with the head priest, he said, "Is there? Is there?"

The priest raised his fist.

Jōshū said, "It is hard to anchor my boat in this shallow water." He went away. He arrived at another temple, met the head priest, and said, "Is there? Is there?"

The head priest raised his fist.

Jōshū said, "It can give, it can grab, it can expand, it can condense."

NOTE: As an historical fact there might have been a reason for Jōshū to reject the fist of one priest and accept the other's. However, all we know about it is that Jōshū did not approve of the first and approved of the second. If one is taken in by the difference between the two, one is in a trap.

433.

One day Jōshū held up a rosary and asked a Korean priest, "Is there such a thing in your country?"

The priest said, "There is."

Jōshū said, "Is it like this?"

The priest said, "It is not."

Jōshū said, "You said there is such a thing. Why is it not similar?"

The priest was speechless.

Jōshū answered instead, "Don't you know the saying 'Korea is Korea, China is China'?"

NOTE: Through the rosary Jōshū suggests that the unity of all things does not exclude the difference between them.

434.

Jōshū asked a newly arrived monk, "Where have you come from?"

The monk said, "I have come from the south."

Jōshū raised his finger and said, "Do you understand?"

The monk said, "I do not."

Jōshū said, "You do not even understand the greeting 'How do you do.' "

435.

When Jōshū was a pilgrim, he asked Master Daiji, "What is the essence of wisdom?"

Daiji said, "What is the essence of wisdom?"

Jōshū laughed aloud and went away.

One day Daiji saw Jōshū sweeping the ground. He asked, "What is the essence of wisdom?"

Jōshū put the broom down, laughed aloud, and left. Daiji immediately returned to his room.

NOTE: What is the essence of wisdom?

436.

Jōshū went to the place of Master Hyakujō.

Hyakujō asked, "Where have you come from?"

Jōshū said, "From Master Nansen."

Hyakujō said, "What words does Nansen use to teach the people?"

Jōshū said, "Once he said, 'Those who have not yet attained enlightenment should behave solemnly.' "

Hyakujō scolded Jōshū.

Jōshū pretended to be astonished.

Hyakujō said, "That's a fine solemnity."

Performing a dance, Jōshū left.

NOTE: In scolding Jōshū, Hyakujō puts on a show of "solemnity."

In pretending to be surprised, Jōshū suggests that he is not taken

in by Nansen's conventions. His performing a dance is a further

proof that each master has his own Zen.

437.

Jōshū went to the place of Master Tōsu. They were eating, facing each other, when Tōsu offered Jōshū a boiled rice cake. Jōshū said, "I won't eat it."

At that Tōsu picked up some sesame cakes and ordered a young novice to offer them to Jōshū. Jōshū accepted the cakes, thanked the novice, and bowed three times. Tōsu kept silent.

A monk drew a portrait of Jōshū and presented it to him. Jōshū said, "If that resembles me, may I be struck dead. If it doesn't, burn it."

Jōshū was walking with Bunon when he pointed at a piece of land and said, "That's a good place to build a checkpoint." Bunon went there, stood, and said, "Present your passport!" Jōshū at once slapped him in the face. Bunon said, "Your passport is all right. Pass!"

Jōshū asked a newly arrived monk, "Where have you just come from?" The monk said, "From Mount Gotai." Jōshū said, "Did you see Monju Buddha?" The monk stretched out his hand. Jōshū said, "There are a good many who stretch out their hands. But who has seen Monju?" The monk said, "I was just thwarted and vexed." Jōshū said, "'If one has not seen the wild geese in the clouds, how can one know the cold of the desert fort?'"

NOTE: In stretching out his hand, the monk seems to suggest that there is no difference between himself and Monju. When Jōshū sees through his "Zen show," the monk honestly admits his failure to meet with Monju (i.e., to attain enlightenment). When the wild geese are seen flying south, one knows that winter is near. In this quote from a Chinese poem, Jōshū seems to suggest that although the monk may not have arrived at it yet, he is not far away.

441.

Jōshū went together with the head monk to see the stone bridge. He asked the head monk, "Who built it?"

The head monk said, "[The craftsman] Riyō built it."

Jōshū said, "When he built it, where did he start working on it?"
The head monk could not answer.

Jōshū said, "They are always talking about the stone bridge, but if you ask them, they don't even know where to set their hands to it."

442.

The head priest of a Korean temple invited Jōshū to dinner. When Jōshū arrived in front of the gate, he asked, "What temple is this?"

The priest said, "A Korean temple."

Jōshū said, "A sea divides you and me."

NOTE: In answering "a Korean temple" to Jōshū's "What temple is this?" the priest misses the point of the question. On the other hand, had he answered philosophically, he would not have fared much better. The proper answer might be "Why don't you go in and see for yourself?"

443.

Jōshū asked a monk, "Where have you come from?"

The monk said, "I have come from Master Ungo."

Jōshū said, "What are the words of Ungo?"

The monk said, "A monk asked, 'When the antelope sticks its horns into a tree at night—what is that like?' And Ungo said, 'Six times six—thirty-six.'"

Jōshū said, "Well, brother Ungo is still well and sound."

The monk asked, "Master, what do you think?"

Jōshū said, "Nine times nine—eighty one."

NOTE: "When the antelope sticks its horns into a tree at night" describes a state of perfect unity, in which the different things are harmonized into one. The same is suggested in the mathematical equations.

An old woman entered the monastery after dark.

Jōshū said, "What are you doing here?"

The old woman said, "I came for a night's lodging."

Jōshū said, "What do you think this place is?"

The old woman laughed aloud and left.

NOTE: The old woman may not be as learned as a Zen monk, but she is "one with the Way." The encounter between Jōshū and the old woman is thus of a more direct and violent nature than the usual encounter with "pursuers of the Way." When Jōshū is simply himself, he has the upper hand. Here he simply drives her away.

When Jōshū was outside of the monastery one day, he came across an old woman carrying a basket. He immediately asked, "Where are you going?"

The old woman said, "I am on my way to steal Jōshū's bamboo shoots."

Jōshū said, "What will you do if you run into Jōshū?"

The old woman came up to Jōshū and gave him a slap.

NOTE: Here Jōshū behaves in a somewhat overconscious manner. When he is overconscious of the situation, the old woman overpowers him.

The head monk was giving rice grains to the birds, and all the birds flew away. Jōshū saw this and said, "Why do the birds that see you fly away?"

The head monk said, "They are afraid of me."

Jōshū said, "What are you saying?" And he answered himself: "Because I have thoughts of killing."

447.

Jōshū asked a monk, "Where have you come from?"

The monk said, "I have come from Kōsei."

Jōshū said, "Where would you place me?"

The monk did not answer.

NOTE: Kōsei was a Zen center in the south of China. In provoking the monk to compare, Jōshū tests his "evenness of mind."

448.

Passing by the main hall, Jōshū saw a monk worshipping. Jōshū hit him once with his stick.

The monk said, "After all, worshipping is a good thing."

Jōshū said, "A good thing isn't as good as nothing."

449.

Jōshū went to see Master Tōkan. Tōkan asked Jōshū, "Do you know about Tōkan's barrier?"

Jōshū said, "Yes."

Tōkan said, "Those with passports can pass. Those without passports cannot pass."

Jōshū said, "When the emperor comes in his chariot—what then?"

Tōkan said, "Of course, he must be inspected before he is allowed to pass."

Jōshū said, "You are rebelling, aren't you?"

NOTE: The Chinese character *kan* in "Tōkan" stands for "barrier." Inspecting the emperor may be consistent with the idea of a "barrier," but it is impractical and dangerous. Tōkan seems to be stuck in his own "barrier."

Jōshū went to Master Hoju's place.

When Hoju saw Jōshū coming, he turned around and sat with his back to Jōshū.

Jōshū spread his cushion on the floor and was about to bow when Hoju stood up.

Jōshū immediately left.

Once when Jōshū was at Master Nansen's place, Nansen entered the meditation hall and went around and around, leading a cow. The head monk hit the cow's back three times. Nansen immediately stopped. Later Jōshū put a bundle of grass in front of the head monk. The head monk was speechless.

NOTE: The head monk can deal with the cow situation up to a certain point. Yet when faced with a bundle of grass, he remembers "head monk" and forgets "cow."

A novice who met with Jōshū praised him, saying, "You are old Buddha."

Jōshū said, "You are new Buddha."

A monk asked Jōshū, "What is enlightenment?"

Jōshū said, "I am hard of hearing."

The monk repeated his question.

Jōshū said, "I'm not deaf, you know."

Then Jōshū composed a poem:

"The one who freely walks the Great Way,
faces the gate of enlightenment.
When one is just sitting, the mind is limitless.
Each year the spring, again the spring."

454.

A monk asked, "The two lanes of life and death—are they the same? Are they different?"

Jōshū composed a poem:

"The man of the Way asks about life and death.
What is there to say about life and death?
The waters of the lake beneath the Sara tree [under
which Buddha entered into Nirvana]
The full moon shining on heaven, on earth.
I call his the knowledge of words.
He is like one playing with ghosts.
The one who desires to understand life and death
is like a lunatic recounting his spring night's dream."

455.

A monk asked, "It is said that 'In times of disaster the Buddhas hide themselves in the flame.' Master, where do you hide yourself in times of disaster?"

Jōshū composed a poem:

"He talks about the Buddha's disasters.
Yet I say that he himself has met with a calamity.
Just look how I escape disaster.
Why should such a thing follow us about?
'Is' or 'is not' cannot be reached with words;
'come' and 'go' are not come and go.
I have preached for you the truth (of "disaster"):
Face to face, know it!"

Jōshū saw a pagoda being built. He composed a poem:

“Originally it [reality] is round and full.
 What is the use of piling up stones?
 Even if you engrave name and form,
 It is far removed from me.
 If I am asked by the people,
 Nothing shall induce me to draw up a plan.”

Jōshū composed a poem about the wooden drum:

“The four great elements are the creation of nature,
 yet what is essential for the sound is the void.
 Do not think it strange that this is not preached to the
 common man.
 This tune is different from the common one.”

Jōshū composed a poem about the lotus flower.

“Its wonderful root and bud are snow-white, bright.
 When was it parted with the western skies?
 Nobody knows how deep the mud it grows in is.
 When it emerges from the water, we know it is the white
 lotus.

NOTE: The beautiful lotus flower emerging from the mud symbolizes the Buddha-nature inherent in this life of suffering and passions. “The western skies” refers to India, the country where Buddhism originated.

NOTES

1. Recorded by Akizuki Ryūmin in *Zen no rekishi-chūgoku* (Chikuma Shōbun), pp. 198–99.
2. All proper names in this book are presented in their Japanese reading. (The Chinese reading of Jōshū is *Chao-chou*.) This biographical sketch of Jōshū is based mainly on *Keitōden-tōroku*; other sources show some differences in minor details.
3. Sōkōsōden.
4. Jōshūroku, Introduction.
5. Sōkōsōden, Sōtōshū.
6. Jōshūroku, Introduction.
7. Like many Zen masters, Jōshū is named for the place of his residence. Jōshū means “the province of Jō.”
8. Most of the quotes are from *Zenrinkushū*, a collection of Zen poems. In a few cases I used the translation of Ushū Muira and Ruth Fuller Sasaki.





Here, translated into English for the first time, are more than 450 aphorisms and koans from *The Sayings of Jōshū*, one of the outstanding Zen texts of T'ang period China. Jōshū (788-897), a Buddhist purist and iconoclast, is one of the best known and most controversial figures in the pantheon of Zen. The sayings attributed to him and the stories in which he figures are classics of Zen teaching.

Preface by Master Hirano Sōjō

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